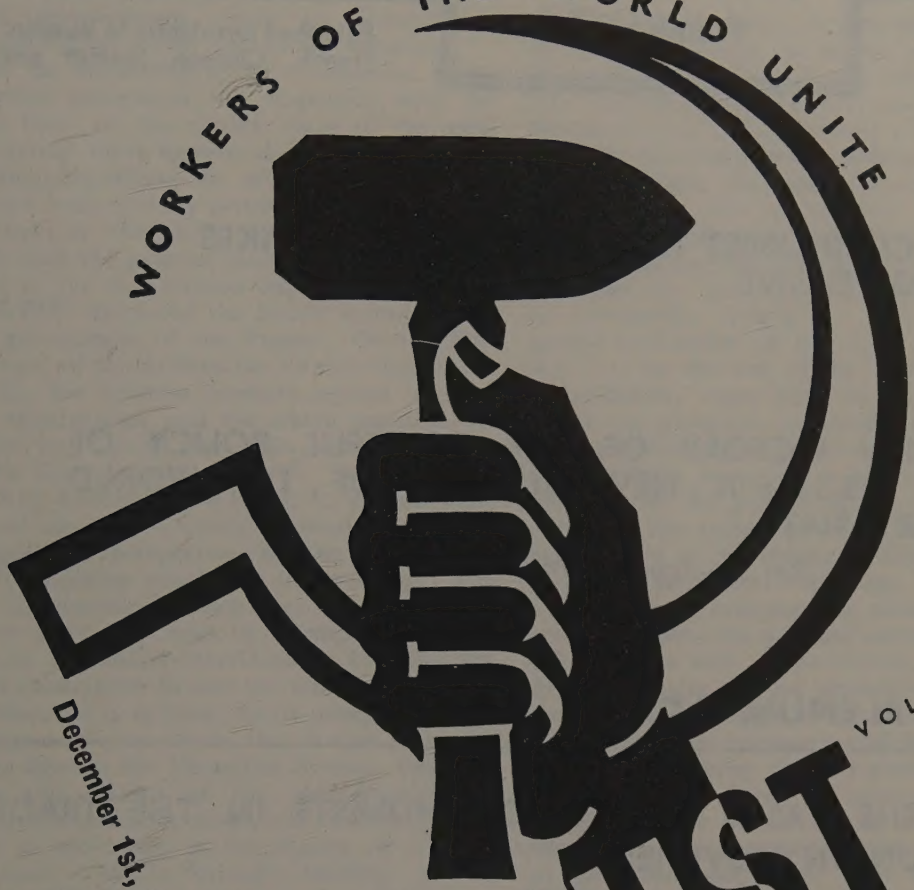
XII PLENUM E.C.C.I.



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THE C.P.G. TAKES THE OFFENSIVE

THE revolutionary crisis in Germany is maturing *with ever increasing rapidity.*

Under the leadership of the Communist Party the German proletariat has responded with the hammer blow of the mighty wave of the anti-fascist united front against the bloody excesses of National Socialism, for which German social-democracy had carefully prepared the way. With the blows of the daily growing mass strike struggle and the general strike of the transport workers in the four million capital, the German workers have answered the bandit decree of the fascist government of von Papen. On the XV. anniversary of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., the German workers replied to the fascist dictatorship, and the whole camp of the capitalist way out of the crisis with six million votes for Communism.

The XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I., and the Conference of the C.P.G. which followed it, set forth clear Bolshevik perspectives for the development of the proletarian revolution in Germany. The fascist dictatorship, which was established in Germany after July 20th, is attempting to rally the forces of counter-revolution. Utilising the wave of chauvinism to slur the acuteness of class antagonisms, it is striving, by its policy of imperialist aggression, to create the illusion of a real struggle against the Versailles System, and thus harness the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie, duped by National Socialism, and frenzied by the agonies of the crisis, to the chariot of German imperialism. While furiously striking at the standard of life of the working masses, the fascist government of von Papen is attempting to unite agrarian and industrial capital by giving them sops in turn—subsidies of billions to industrial capital, and the famous policy of "autarchy"* in order to create the illusion that the capitalist crisis is really beginning to be conquered, and in this way, chain the toiling masses of Germany to the chariot of the capitalist system.

But these attempts to rally the forces of counter-revolution are being brought to nought by the ever more rapid tempo of the growing wave of the revolutionary upsurge. The period of the optimistic prophecies of the German bourgeoisie's summer has come to an end. No one in Germany forecasts any alleviation of the economic crisis whatever. The crisis is growing spontaneously. And no one is able to stop the growing discontent and indignation of the workers against the bourgeoisie and its fascist government. This is the essence of the situation. Only opportunists, who deny the class struggle or those who, like social-democracy, are consciously working for a capitalist way out of the crisis, can ignore this, or deliberately maintain silence on it. The XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Party Conference of the C.P.G. opposed a Bolshevik resistance to this opportunist defeatist theory, which directly reflects the influence of social-fascism, namely, that the outstanding feature in the modern development of the class struggle, firstly in Germany, are the "victories" of counter-revolution, and the "defeats" of the working class and its Communist vanguard. The important historical declaration of the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism,* especially with regard to Germany, where the processes indicating the end of capitalist stabilisation, have gone further than in other big capitalist countries, was made precisely on the basis of the *growth of the forces of revolution,* and the resulting inevitability of a *further acceleration of the tempo* of this growth, as the result of the general conditions.

Treacherous international social-democracy is trying to *poison* the working masses with defeatist spinelessness and its *pessimism*, and kill the growing desire of the proletariat to enter the revolutionary struggle. The double-dealing vileness of the new manœuvres of the "left" leaders of social-democracy consists precisely in the fact that, while (in words, of course!) praising the victories of the Soviet Union to the XV. Anniversary of the Revolution, they sell themselves to their own bourgeoisie with all the greater cynicism and attack, slander, and perjure Communism in their own country with all the greater brutality, using the police apparatus of the bourgeois state against it. The High Philistine of the II. International, Otto Bauer, announces that if the Bolsheviks succeed in solving the problem of consumption, the U.S.S.R. will solve the problem of the world revolution. Not to mention the despicable proviso ("if") which he makes, when faced with the historic fact of the gigantic victories of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., this most "lucid" admission of Otto Bauer was needed by him, above all, for the purpose of contrasting the victories of socialism in the U.S.S.R. to the statement that in capitalist countries there have been nothing but victories of fascism, for the purpose of *leading* the masses astray from a realisation of the powerful growth of the revolutionary upsurge in capitalist countries. Herr Bauer will probably be prepared to recognise the German revolution; when

* Economic autonomy or exclusiveness.

* Theses and Resolution XII. Plenum E.C.C.I. Modern Books. W.L.P.

it is an accomplished fact. "If the revolution has already started," said Lenin about the renegade Kautsky, "he also is prepared to become a revolutionary! But, we remark, every swine will pronounce himself a revolutionary then."

Another Philistine and scoundrel, who was thrown out of the Communist Party of Germany, the "non-Party" renegade and rapscallion Rosenberg, who is advertised by the whole social-fascist press for his book "Bolshevism," "bows down" before the great achievements and victories of the working class in the U.S.S.R.; and simultaneously declares with "sorrow" that a "parallel decline" of the Communist International, and the "national isolation" of the Soviet proletariat is taking place.

Just as the sun is reflected even in a muddy drop of water, so in these statements of the social hangers-on of all types, there is reflected the revolutionary onslaught of the working masses, the fear and frenzied hate of the proletarian revolution in the minds of these gentlemen. The practical leaders of German social-democracy (including this same Bauer) had good reason, immediately after the elections to the German Reichstag, to appeal with ever-increasing frequency and urgency to the Communist International to limit its activity, to give up its irreconcilability and "some of its convictions" ("Gesellschaft," August-September, 1932) in the name of the "united Marxist front" for the "salvation of the German Republic." These "Marxists," confused when faced with the revolutionary activity of the masses and kow-towing to the German bourgeoisie, say nothing about the bourgeois character of the "democracy" of the German Republic, and again endeavour to trick the masses with the bait of socialist phrases, demanding in the name of socialism that bourgeois democracy should be carried *to its conclusion*, i.e., that the struggle for a revolutionary way out of the crisis, and the dictatorship of the proletariat should be abandoned.

The XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Party Conference of the C.P.G. gave a Leninist reply to the renegades, by their clear Bolshevik directives on the preparation of the masses for the decisive revolutionary fights—a reply which was old and tried in the fights of the October Revolution.

The development of the class struggle in Germany since the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. has completely confirmed the analysis of the XII. Plenum. After a number of months of the frantic violence of the terrorist gangs of the fascists, of unrestricted chauvinist propaganda, and unprecedented treachery by social-democracy under the pretence of a struggle against fascism, after a series of spectacular parliamentary successes of National Socialism and a prolonged lull in the strike struggle of the proletariat, we now see an unceasing wave of economic struggles, the extreme political sharpening of the economic struggle of the proletariat, the defeat of fascism and social-democracy, and the big success of the Communist Party in the new parliamentary elections. This new rise of the revolutionary wave and the *combination of the Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary successes* of the Communist vanguard in Germany, is a direct and unmistakeable reply by the German proletariat, to the treacherous work of social-democracy, and likewise to all the defeatists and panicmongers, who in the ranks of the C.P.G., have opportunistically distorted the general line of the Communist International, who, during the presidential elections, howled together with the social-democrats about the defeat of the C.P.G. and the German working class, opportunistically distorting the slogan of the people's revolution and the task of struggling against fascism, opportunistically distorting the task of struggling against social-democracy as the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, and thus weakening the fighting powers and the forces of the revolutionary vanguard in the matter of solving the fundamental strategic task of the moment—the winning over of the majority of the working class in Germany.

The determined course taken by the Communist Party of Germany to carry out the decisions of the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and to cleanse the policy of the C.P.G. from all elements of the opportunist distortion of the general line of Bolshevism in the conditions of the end of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, considerably assisted to bring about the revolutionary successes which have recently been achieved. The chief achievement in the revolutionary struggle of the German proletariat during the last few months is undoubtedly the ever-increasing activity of the German workers in the strike struggle. This strike activity of the German proletariat was also of *decisive importance* for the result of the *parliamentary elections*. This strike activity, which reached its culminating point in the strike of 22,000 transport workers in Berlin, reflects most clearly that intensification of the class struggle in Germany which was the keynote of the Reichstag elections. In these strikes, a most symptomatic feature was the fact that they resulted in material and political successes for the strikers in places where there was the most *consistent Communist leadership*, and on the other hand the biggest electoral victories of the

C.P.G. were obtained in the districts where *the strike movement was strongest.* In this respect, the results of the elections in Berlin are particularly instructive. Here the brilliant victory of the C.P.G. coincided with the height of the struggle of the Berlin transport workers, in which the leading rôle was in the hands of the C.P.G. and the revolutionary T.U. movement, from beginning to end, while the social-democrats exposed themselves from start to finish as a hireling band of strike-breakers for capitalism.

The tremendous political importance of the strike of the Berlin transport workers, which broke out on the very eve of the Reichstag elections, was also realised by the whole of the bourgeoisie. The organ of the Centre, "Deutschland" had good reason to write that "the strike of the Berlin transport workers was not only a political struggle but also a *political signal.* The "Berliner Börsenzeitung" had good reason to write that "the activity of the Communist Party is far in excess of the normal activity of election propaganda." In this strike, as in many of the big strikes which have recently taken place (Belgium, Geneva), new manifestations and forms of proletarian activity, in the conditions of the end of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, have found vivid expression. There had not been any strike in Berlin transport for *nine years* — since 1923. The reformist union was very strong here. But in spite of all the efforts of the reformists, in spite of their recognition of the binding nature of the arbitration court decision, in spite of all their strike-breaking work, they could not persuade the working masses to refrain from striking. The greatest activity in this strike was shown by the *busmen*, who have responded hitherto *least of all* to revolutionary propaganda. The National Socialists who, at first, wanted to follow the reformists in admitting the binding nature of the decisions of the arbitration court, were compelled, under the pressure of their own masses, to join the strike. This participation in the strike was an attempt to deceive the Berlin proletariat with social-demagogy, so that, by this means, they could ensure a split in the working masses for themselves right before the elections to the Reichstag. This is one of the chief causes why Strasser gave his categoric refusal to reply to the proposal of Hammerstein to abandon the strike, and enter the government. *Before* the elections there could be no question of abandoning the strike.

The National Socialists had need of this, especially because they clearly felt the disappointment of the workers and unemployed who had been deceived by them, and who had been diverted by social demagogy into the ranks of fascism, a discontent which has been expressed in the growth of the anti-fascist united front in recent months. It was a further attempt to ensure the conversion of the factory cells of the National Socialists into mass fascist trade union organisations. *The attempt was not successful.* The defeat of the National Socialists in Berlin was not so great as that of the social-democrats or as the defeat of the "Nazis" themselves in other industrial centres of Germany. But it remains a fact that in all the proletarian divisions of Berlin, the losses of the National Socialists were very palpable.

A new feature in German strikes struggle, which characterises the higher level of this struggle, is the rôle of the *Strike Committee*, which was elected from below by delegate conferences, and which, *from beginning to end, kept the leadership in its own hands.* By its leadership, the Communist Party succeeded in creating a most popular strike committee in which were represented non-Party, Social-Democratic and National-Socialist workers. It was no chance that the social-police "Vorwaerts" concentrated all its blows particularly against the strike committee, "under the terror of which," according to this paper, the reformist workers were compelled to join the strike.

A further new feature in this strike, finally, was its result. In spite of the fact that, under the pressure of police terror and the strike-breaking of social-democracy, the workers accepted a reduction of 2 pfennigs an hour from their wages, even in spite of the mass dismissals which commenced in the factories, *moral and political success* was entirely in favour of the strikers, and the *Communist Party* which headed the strike.

In such circumstances of sharp intensification of the class struggle, the German workers proceeded to the new elections to the Reichstag— the fifth big electoral campaign this year. The keynote of the elections was the *extra-Parliamentary* mass struggle of the proletariat, and the *maturing of a revolutionary crisis* in Germany.

The first fundamental lesson of this electoral campaign is that neither the fascist dictatorship of the Von Papen government, nor the mass movement of German fascism, nor the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie — Social-Democracy — which was utilised by monopolist capital for the strengthening of its dictatorship, none of these was able to retard the accelerating speed of the radicalisation of the masses, to prevent the processes of crisis in the mass movement of German fascism; or those of the growing crisis of social-democracy, which had already been so clearly expressed in the elections to the Reichstag, three

months previously. The changes in the relationship of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution are continuing to move irresistibly in a direction beneficial to the *working class and its Communist vanguard.* In the conditions of the most brutal police terror, the Communist Party not only increased its vote by 700,000 and raised the proportion of Communist votes from 14.5 per cent. to 17 per cent., but—which is most important—it obtained its biggest victories in the *decisive industrial centres*—especially in Berlin, and the industrial district of the Rhine and Westphalia. The elections showed that in Germany the Communist Party has been able to create a serious barrier *to the chauvinistic wave,* and closely approach the solution of the strategic task of *winning over the majority of the working class.*

The bourgeois-fascist and social-democratic press *attempt to weaken the impression* made by the election results by stating that these results were "expected" by everyone and that electoral activity on the whole was lower than in the previous elections. But though there was a fall in the proportion of voters who took part in the elections there was almost everywhere an increase in the number of Communist votes, and it is precisely this fact which indicates the significance of the successes of the Communist Party, the only Party which emerged from these elections with really substantial gains. It may be said, in passing, that election participation turned out to be much greater than was expected, and was not far behind the record election activity of the previous election. As for Berlin, the participation of the electorate even increased. The number of votes cast was 120,000 higher than at the Reichstag elections on July 31st this year, but the Communists won 140,000 more votes, i.e., 20,000 more than the total increase in the number of votes, and 30,000 more than the combined losses of the social-democrats and national-socialists.

The second lesson of the election campaign is to be found in the *defeat of national socialism.* The elections showed that the programme of social and national liberation, put forward by the Communist Party two years ago, is becoming more and more a revolutionary weapon for the concrete exposure of the national and social demagogy of national-socialism. The masses are understanding more and more that *chauvinism will not destroy the Versailles system.* Six million votes for Communism—such is the reply of the working class in Germany to the increasing aggressiveness of German imperialism, to the military adventures of General von Schleicher, to the appeal of Comrade Thälmann from the proletarian tribune in Paris far a struggle *against nationalism, for internationalism.* "The enemy is in our own house." These words of Karl Liebknecht are now penetrating millions of the German proletariat, rousing in them the memory of the monstrous treachery of social-democracy on August 4th, and calling them to a self-sacrificing revolutionary struggle against fascism, against reaction, against new imperialist wars.

The national-socialists are also attempting to assuage the impression of their defeat by indicating that these election results were "expected" by them. On the eve of the elections, the chairman of the Prussian Landtag, the national-socialist Kerl deliberately emphasised that the opponents of the national-socialists expected to lose at least 100 mandates. No less than Hitler himself announced, on the day before the poll, to the press chief of the national-socialists, Dietrich, that "on November 6th, the National-Socialists will obtain the biggest victory ever known in the history of the National-Socialist movement," and it was no less than Hitler himself who proudly demanded from President Hindenburg, on August 13th, that the government power should be transferred to the National-Socialists, and promised to reach this power by "national election." The Hitlerites got no help from their demagogic "support" of the strike of the Berlin transport workers. Two million electors, a very large proportion of them workers, deserted the ranks of National-Socialism. For the first time in the course of several years, National-Socialism was on the *defensive* in the parliamentary elections. The slowing down of the growth of the National-Socialists, which had made itself evident at the last elections, now turned into a big defeat in the industrial districts, and, what is of the greatest importance, in all those towns and provinces where the National-Socialists had been in power. *The masses are learning by their own experience.* In Chemnitz the National-Socialists lost 62,000 votes, in Dusseldorf East, 75,000; in Westphalia, 74,000; in Dresden, 78,000. In Coburg, where the National-Socialists ruled the municipal council, and promised the unemployed to create a "model community," they lost 33 per cent. of their votes. They lost most of all in Braunschweig, in Thuringia, in Anhalt and in Bremen, where the election campaigns had so recently put them in power. Finally, their defeat is characteristic in the agricultural districts, especially in Eastern Prussia. This proves on the one hand the beginning of a successful breach in the petty-bourgeois mass basis of fascism by the Communist Party, and, on the other hand, it shows that a considerable mass of the petty-bourgeoisie, and especially the officials who had been waiting for Hitler's accession to power, to strengthen their official

positions, have gone back to the capitalist parties which form the present government.

But, however great the defeat of national-socialism may have been, it would be criminally frivolous to talk of the smashing up of the mass movement of fascism. The social-democrats, in their efforts to more easily conceal their dismay at the result of the elections, are now shouting loudest of all about the "Marne of German fascism," about the "final annihilation of Hitler and Hitlerism." To conceal their rôle of lackeys of the fascist dictatorship, of the von Papen government, the rôle of the instrument which leads the masses of the German proletariat beneath the axe of the fascist dictatorship, they are now trying to sow the illusion among the German workers that "the ballot-box has defeated German fascism." "One thing is now clear," exultantly exclaims the organ of Otto Bauer. "Germany will not be fascist!" Of course Germany will not be fascist. *The guarantee of this is the victory of the Communists, from anti-fascist mass defence to the struggle of the Berlin transport workers; the guarantee of this is the hundreds of thousands of German workers who are striking, under the leadership of the C.P.G.,* the new hundreds of thousands of workers' votes cast for Communism, and the steady growth of Communism, which has found expression since the elections to the Reichstag already, in the local elections of the various countries of the German Republic. The Communist Party of Germany will still more increase the mobilisation of the masses against *all forms* of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, above all, against the *existing* fascist dictatorship of the von Papen government, which the social-democrats are already supporting and, in order to strengthen which, the gentlemen of the type of Bauer are howling about the final defeat of Hitler and the disappearance of the danger of fascist dictatorship in Germany.

Such is the *second lesson* of the Reichstag election on November 6th.

The *third lesson is the rôle of social democracy.* The social-democratic leaders, who have the fortunate possibility of expending the membership dues of millions of workers organised in the reformist trade unions without their control, have developed an intense agitational campaign. The extensive "left" manoeuvres of German social-democracy were to have served as the backbone of this agitation. Wells and Loebe are yearning for "socialism" and "socialisation." Various theoreticians of German social-democracy have now begun to prove that socialism was impossible for Germany at the time when Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by social-democracy, and to expound the necessity of big slogans: "socialism" and the "power" of the working class in our time. At that time, they try to prove, the German workers had not yet matured to the height of socialism, but now they have already completely matured for it. But the working masses of Germany are learning by their own experience to judge the demagogues, not by their words, but by their *deeds.* Social-democracy, which has been continually losing at the parliamentary elections since 1928, has lost a further 700,000 votes, and only registered a trifling growth in Upper Silesia, Coblenz (Trier) and a few towns in Saxony. In all the chief industrial districts, the social-democrats, like the National-Socialists, have lost ground. In Hamburg, that stronghold of German social-democracy, where it had relative success at the previous elections, it has now lost 21,000 votes. In the old traditional centre of social-democracy, in the electoral district of Chemnitz-Zwickau, the C.P.G., for the first time, turned out to be *stronger than social-democracy,* in the elections. And this took place, in spite of the fact that here was the centre of "left" social-democracy, which lost relatively less in this campaign (and in some districts of Saxony even increased) than in Germany as a whole. And also in spite of the fact that the biggest forces of social-democracy were mobilised here, including Wells and Severing.

Social-democracy is also trying to mitigate the impression of its defeat by awkward reasoning that it "expected" these results. The social-democratic press speaks of "some reduction" in the social-democratic vote. But then it declaims with still greater energy of the "victory of the proletarian Marxist front," of the successes of the "working class as a whole." The social-democratic leaders are making desperate efforts to consolidate their influence over the working masses, who are slipping away from them by developing clap-trap about the "united front." By the united front they understand a *bloc of leaders, the abandonment of the struggle for Communism by the Communists, the salvation of capitalism under the flag of "saving the Republic."* The Communists must understand, say Bauer and Wells, that they have now a tremendous responsibility, and that "it is not the Soviet dictatorship which stands on the order of the day, but the struggle for the Republic." This new attempt at the bare-faced spoofing of the working masses, this juggling trickery with the slogan of the united front, which, if carried out by the social-fascists, would mean the direct establishment of peace with the bourgeoisie, is also a result of the defeat of the National-Socialists, and the *strengthening of the rôle of social democracy as the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie in connection* with this.

And however great may be the defeat of social-democracy, it would be criminal and frivolous to rest on our laurels, and underestimate the significance of its still strong influence among the masses of the German working class. The German working class is turning from the social-democratic leaders with ever-growing disgust since their treachery of July 20th, since the cynical strike-breaking part of the Trade Union bureaucrats in the Berlin transport strike, since the open talk of a "trade union government" of Leipart-Strasser, since the open support of the government of the fascist dictatorship of von Papen by social-democracy. But so long as the rôle of social-democracy, as the main social bulwark of the present fascist dictatorship in Germany, does not penetrate to the innermost consciousness of the overwhelming masses of social-democratic workers and the members of reformist trade unions, so long as the social-democratic workers have not become convinced of this, by their own experience, German social-democracy will still be able to preserve its influence on considerable masses of the German proletariat. The task of the Communist Party of Germany remains, as before—to direct the *chief blow, at the present stage, against social-democracy.* Therefore the prompt and rapid defeat of the *new manœuvres* of social-democracy is the *task* of the *moment,* for the Communist vanguard. The insufficiency of the successes of the C.P.G. in the districts where the influence of "left" social-democracy is strongest, arises, above all, from the fact that the Communists in these places were least able to prove to the broad masses of German workers that the rôle of social-democracy is to be the instrument of monopolist capital, to sweep the path for the fascist dictatorship.

What are the *immediate perspectives* of the von Papen *Government of the fascist dictatorship?*

Von Papen is also pretending to be "satisfied" with the results of the Reichstag elections. The algebraical calculations of the von Papen government are as follow: The nationalists, the Hugenberg party, the leading government party of von Papen, have increased their votes by 900,000. He includes the 10,000,000 non-voters in his assets as supporters of the "President's government" and opponents of the "Party System." Von Papen does not count the Communists at all, as he regards them as being entirely outside the bourgeois government. But the "opposition" parties (National-Socialists, social-democrats, Centre) have lost everything. The possible majority of the National-Socialists and the Centre has been broken. Without the nationalists there cannot be a bourgeois majority in the new Reichstag. This is the "success" of the von Papen government. There is no doubt that the von Papen government, after browbeating the National-Socialists, will now once more offer Hitler the opportunity of entering the government, in some humble capacity, and thus strengthen the present fascist dictatorship by forming a parliamentary basis. The National-Socialists are hardly likely to agree to such a rôle in the von Papen government, because this will inevitably *intensify* their desertion by the working masses, who have been duped by them.

But whether there is a government with Hitler or without him, whether the fascist dictatorship of von Papen rules Germany as a "President's government" or as a "purely parliamentary" government, whether it is von Papen or some other trusted agent of monopolist capital in Germany, in desperation at its own contradictions, who stands at the head of the German fascist government, one thing is certain: *the fascist dictatorship of von Papen is not in a position to cope with the growing antagonisms of German capitalism at home and abroad.* A winter of still more severe crisis lies ahead. A further growth of the revolutionary unrest of the wide masses of workers is inevitable. The task of the Communist vanguard in Germany, on the basis of the decisions of the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Party Conference of the C.P.G., the new experience of the revolutionary fights of the most recent period, and concretely taking the lead of all forms of the class struggle of the proletariat, is to *continue the offensive against fascism and social democracy and prepare the masses for the revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for Soviet Germany.*

The Communist Party of Germany was able to rapidly take account of the growing activity of the German workers against fascism and the capitalist offensive, against the predatory decree of von Papen and to *take the lead* of this movement. But the very fact of the strengthening of the contradictions of German capitalism, and the growth of the revolutionary activity of the masses implies the task of the most rapid overcoming of the backwardness in the *mass work* of the C.P.G. with still greater insistency, above all, in the big factories, and among the social-democratic workers, and those in the reformist trade unions. It has never been so clear that the winning of the big factories is the most important stage in the matter of destroying the mass basis of social-democracy, in the matter of solving the strategic task of winning over the majority of the working class. The chief shortcoming of the Berlin transport strike, which led to its termination, was precisely the fact that we did not succeed in

extending the strike, without which a lengthy struggle of the transport workers was of course impossible.

Taking as a basis the leading political directives of the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Party Conference of the C.P.G., the German Bolsheviks will undertake with redoubled energy the task of putting into operation the decisions of the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Party Conference, and will guarantee within a short period to prepare the German proletariat for the decisive revolutionary battles.

A NEW VICTORY OF THE PEACEFUL POLICY OF THE U.S.S.R.—A NEW SUCCESS OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT

(The Non-Aggression Pacts)

THE peaceful policy of the Soviet Union has again won a number of important successes. The non-aggression pact between U.S.S.R. and Poland has been ratified, and a non-aggression pact between the U.S.S.R. and France signed. The conclusion of these treaties is particularly noteworthy owing to the fact that they have been signed with countries which, until recently, represented the most aggressive forces of intervention against the land of the proletarian dictatorship, countries which, in the past, repeatedly attempted with arms in their hands, to overthrow the power of the proletariat by means of war and counter-revolutionary conspiracies, to break the republic of the workers and peasants.

What do these new successes of the land of the proletarian dictatorship, successes which were manifested this time in the form of diplomatic acts, signify, what processes do they testify to ?

In the first place they testify to the tremendous change in the relationship of forces between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world, a change in favour of the U.S.S.R., and against the lands of capital, which was noted by the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in its decisions. The non-aggression pacts concluded between the U.S.S.R. on one hand and France and Poland on the other, the growing tendencies among a section of the capitalist circles of the United States towards recognition of the U.S.S.R. and conclusion of a trade agreement with her, the resumption of diplomatic relations between U.S.S.R. and China constitute an international recognition, in the diplomatic field, of the change in the relationship of forces between these two worlds.

On what basis did these changes develop ? On the basis of the victory of the Leninist line of building socialism in the U.S.S.R., on the basis of industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture.

What Comrade Stalin said in the year of the great change (1929), the first year of the Five-Year Plan, being essentially completed at the present time, is being realised at a truly bolshevist pace. Comrade Stalin said : "We are moving at full speed on the road of industrialisation, to socialism, leaving behind our age-old Russian backwardness. We are becoming a land of metal, a land of automobiles, a land of tractors. And, when we put the U.S.S.R. upon the automobile, and the *mujik** upon the tractor, let the honourable capitalists, who are so proud of their 'civilisation' attempt to overtake us. We will yet see which of the countries will then be defined as backward, and which as advanced."

If we are to state concretely what are the basic factors in the change in the relationship of the two systems, if we are to sum up the early results of the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan in four years, it will be necessary to state, first of all, that the socialist forms of economy in the U.S.S.R. have emerged victorious, and captured a predominate position, not only in the city but also in the village. It is a fact of world historical import that, in the spring of 1932, 80 per cent. of the arable land of the Soviet Union was sown by collective and State farms, and only 20 per cent. by individual peasants.

This was primarily what enabled Comrade Molotov to state at the Congress of Engineers and Technicians of the Soviet Union that :

"Fortunately, we are already able to say that the main range of our internal difficulties has been passed. The Leninist question ' who will beat whom ' has been decided in our country finally and irrevocably."

Those successes of collectivisation have become possible, only thanks to the consistent policy of socialist industrialisation which resulted, at the end of the Five-Year Plan, as its most important consequence, in the creation of an internal base for the technical reconstruction of every field of the national economy, including industry, the transport and particularly agriculture.

It is quite obvious that this victory of the Five-Year Plan has secured the economic independence of the

* Peasant.

U.S.S.R. against the world capitalist market (thus, despite the colossal construction work going on in the country, the U.S.S.R. in 1931 imported only 14.7 per cent. of its machinery for the year, while in 1913, Czarist Russia imported 58.6 per cent. of its machinery) and considerably strengthened its defensive powers.

The enormous growth of the proletariat in industry and on the State farms, the rise of its revolutionary activity in the work of building socialism, the conversion of the middle peasantry when joining collective farms into allies of the proletariat, and a firm foundation for the proletarian dictatorship in the village, the liquidation of the kulaks as a class in the main agricultural regions, and the stamping out of the counter-revolutionary wrecking organisations and of the degenerating opposition groups ; all insured the further internal consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, convincingly demonstrating, even to a large section of the world bourgeoisie, that the Soviet power and Soviet Government, from the point of view of its strength and stability, stands alone of all powers and Governments in the world.

Thus, *the policy of peace systematically pursued by the U.S.S.R. was reinforced by the weighty arguments of its tremendous economic growth, by the strengthening of its economic independence and defensive ability.* It would be a miracle if all these factors did not find a reflection on the international arena, especially under the conditions of the end of the capitalist stabilisation, deepest economic decline of the entire capitalist system, and extreme instability of the Governments of all, even the greatest imperialist Powers.

Indeed, these factors reflected themselves in both tendencies which the U.S.S.R. encounters in its relations with the capitalist world ; the tendency of a section of the capitalists, who, despite all their uncompromising hatred for the U.S.S.R., are more inclined, in the present conditions, to extend the trade relations with the Soviet Union, and establish "peaceful relations" with her ; and the tendencies of the other section of the capitalists toward the immediate rupture of these relations, and the speeding up of the interventionist preparation.

The conflicts growing, during the period of the end of the capitalist stabilisation, within the camp of the bourgeoisie itself, manifested themselves also in the questions of the relations to the U.S.S.R. Are not these conflicts revealed in all their force in Rumania, for instance, where the ruling bourgeois clique, headed by Titulescu, which continues to orientate itself on the "Comité des Forges" and other extreme interventionist groups of the world bourgeoisie, pursues an adventurist policy outside, and the most reactionary policy inside the country ; and, where a considerable section of the ruling classes, in fear of its class rule, was inclined to establish more normal relations with the Soviet Union.

Apart from the recognition of the danger portended to the bourgeois system itself, by an intervention against the U.S.S.R., this strengthening of the tendency of a certain section of the capitalists to establish "peaceful" relations with the Soviet Union is due largely, also, to the grisly hand of the economic crisis, which prompts the bourgeois groups to snatch at every possibility of maintaining economic activity among them, the extension of economic connections with the Soviet Union.

All this does not, however, weaken the danger of an intervention against the U.S.S.R. in the least. "The preparation of intervention has entered a new phase." This thesis of the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. applying primarily to the occupation of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism, not only does not contradict the fact of the conclusion of non-aggression pacts, but on the contrary, is fully corroborated by it.*

The world bourgeoisie is forced to rebuild its interventionist plans in accordance with, and on the basis of, an account of the change in the relationship of forces in favour of the Soviet Union. And this rebuilding of the interventionist plans, which began in 1930-31, marked, first, the recognition of the failure of the previous plans at intervention, the plans of a "small" war to be waged by the forces of the small border States (Poland, Rumania) as well as by the forces of the counter-revolutionary conspiracies (the Industrialist Party, the Menshevist centre) and kulak uprisings within the U.S.S.R. Second, it marked the adoption of a policy of preparation of a large-scale intervention against the Soviet Union, to be carried out by the forces, both of the border States and of the "great" imperialist Powers, or some group of these imperialist Powers.

Even then, in 1931, we wrote :

> "The imperialists were compelled to admit that there was no possibility of restoring capitalism in the U.S.S.R. with the help of the internal counter-revolutionary forces and intervention on the old scale. They were forced to postpone intervention which they had fixed for 1930-31, and to begin universal preparations for intervention on a more extensive front."

Obviously this preparation required a certain amount of time to knock together a new anti-Soviet bloc on a broader base. The sharpening of the imperialist contradictions, in turn, interfered with the formation of such a bloc. This caused a certain lengthening of the "breathing space" for the Soviet Union. It is necessary, in this connection, to remind the entire world proletariat of the fact that this preparation of a great war against the U.S.S.R. has been carried out by the interventionists under cover

* See the Editorial of "The Communist International," No. 21 for 1931 captioned "The Intervention Against Manchuria and Preparations for the Great Anti-Soviet War."

of *pacifist manoeuvres. Imperialist France (represented at that time by Laval and Briand) opened precisely at this time negotiations for the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.*

However, very soon the smoke-screen of pacifist phrases was replaced by cannon fire in the Far East. The occupation of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism (which marked the beginning of a new partition of China) signified, at the same time, the creation of a spring-board for intervention against the U.S.S.R. from the East. The roaring of the guns in Manchuria was accompanied by sharp attacks upon the U.S.S.R. in the West, primarily by the suspension of the negotiations for a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on the part of France, a number of measures tending to organise an economic boycott (discrimination against Soviet trade), attempts to drag Germany into the anti-Soviet bloc, etc., etc.

In the editorial of the "C.I." No. 21 (1931) cited above, we wrote in this connection :

> "From the moment when Japan began military intervention against Manchuria . . . these preparations for the great war against the Soviet Union took on a new and more acute form."

However, the imperialists this time failed to inveigle the U.S.S.R. into war. The peaceful policy of the Soviet Union frustrated all provocations. The essential completion of the Five-Year Plan in four years tremendously strengthened the positions of the U.S.S.R. and its situation internationally. The outbreak of imperialist contradictions (in the Pacific, around Versailles) handicapped the formation of an anti-Soviet bloc. The revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the development of the revolutionary crisis in Germany and Poland, in turn, prevented the imperialists from supporting the Japanese blow from the East, by a co-ordinated attack from the West.

Under these conditions, the ratification of a pact with Poland and conclusion of a pact with France obviously signifies the strengthening of the Soviet Union, and the weakening of the positions of world capital. Naturally, the Communists support these pacts, while clearly understanding, and explaining to all toilers that no treaties (not excluding the non-aggression pacts) can eliminate the immediate danger of war. The non-aggression pacts merely handicap the interventionist preparations on the part of the imperialists. The forces most aggressive to the U.S.S.R., partly utilising the fall of the Herriot Cabinet, endeavour to prevent the ratification of the agreement. Should this not succeed, then, *under cover of the treaty the forces representing war continue vigorous preparations for it.* This is imperialist pacifism, and the slightest abatement of the struggle against it, on our part, represents a great danger. The world bourgeoisie is impelled to reconstruct the intervention plans in accord with, and on the basis of, the change now proceeding in the relation of forces in the interest of the Soviet Union. The Communists must explain to the workers that the intervention against the U.S.S.R. is being prepared in new forms.

Attempts are being made to organise it on a broader basis, on the basis of the encirclement of the U.S.S.R. both from the West and the East. The external evidence (which is open) of this is as follows : The creation of a jumping-off ground by Japanese imperialism in Manchuria, and the openly interventionist plans of the Japanese military, headed by the War Minister Araki ; the cancellation of the trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. by the British imperialists, and the unbridled anti-Soviet campaign in England ; the virtual seizure of Tibet by British imperialism ; the disruption by the Rumanian Government (and the interventionist cliques of France and Great Britain behind it) of the non-aggression pact which had already been prepared for signature ; the continuing construction of strategic railways along the Soviet borders, the final failure of the Disarmament Conference, etc., etc.

The future holds no period of peace and co-operation among the nations in store, but a new series of revolutions and wars.

This makes it the duty of the Communists to fight against all attempts at intervention *with particular vigilance and energy*. The bourgeoisie lulls the masses, while preparing war, by spreading the idea of imperialist pacifism. This makes it even more imperative for the Communists to sound the alarm, and urge all workers and toilers to a struggle against imperialist war and intervention, to a struggle in the defence of the Soviet Union.

* * *

What is the second lesson and second cause of the conclusion of the non-aggression pacts ?

The conclusion of the pacts testifies again (and in a very ugly form) that the League of Nations has entered a deep crisis, and the Versailles system of oppression and enslavement of the nations has broken down, that the contradictions between the imperialists are becoming more and more intense and acute. The conclusion of the pacts reflects those changes and re-groupings in the camp of imperialism which are a result of the breakdown of the Versailles system, and sharpening of the relations between the capitalist nations.

This is not only urged by the Communists ; it cannot be concealed, even by the bourgeois Press.

Thus the Polish newspaper "Nasz Przeglond" makes the following far-from-complimentary remarks on the League of Nations :

> "The peaceful co-operation between Poland and France in Eastern Europe, based upon complete equality, is being strengthened by facts quite

independent of the League of Nations. It appeared that bi-lateral agreements are possible which facilitate Poland's active diplomatic rôle, whereas the Geneva apparatus assigned to Poland the unattractive rôle of a client of the Great Powers."

But the crisis of the League of Nations cannot but signify a considerable change in the international position of French imperialism, the leading force of the League of Nations.

Responding to the conclusion of the pacts, the German bourgeois newspaper "Berliner Boersen-courier" notes that "A crack has appeared in the allied system of France's vassals." The organ of the Slav clericals (Jugo-Slavia) expresses itself even more categorically, discerning in the latest events a "collapse of the anti-Soviet front" of the Baltic and Danubian States which has been created during the last ten years.

The Rumanian newspaper, "Kuventul," bitterly complains that:

"In the long run Rumania's interests were not taken into account; precisely at the moment when the Soviet Union is most sharply placing our borders in doubt."

(The newspaper is referring to Bessarabia which, it will be remembered, was forcibly annexed by the Rumanian boyars from the U.S.S.R., and which continues to suffer under the Rumanian imperialist yoke.)

Is this appearance of fissures in the system of the French vassal States accidental? No, of course not! All of these border States are in the throes of the deepest crisis, on the brink of State bankruptcy. Besides, the activisation of German imperialism places the Eastern borders, established by the Versailles Treaty, in doubt. The Polish-German conflict over the Prussian corridor, Danzig and Silesia, constitutes one of the sharpest imperialist conflicts, fraught with a new imperialist war. Under these conditions, the border States lying side by side with the Soviet Union (whose strength is constantly growing) cannot but develop the tendency to establish peaceful relations with it. Under these conditions, the policy of French imperialism represented by the cautious Herriot Government, which is capable of large-scale manoeuvres, could not but undergo certain changes. France was compelled to come to terms with the Soviet Union, in order thus to attempt to stop the deepening of the crack in its system of vassal States in the East. Certain bourgeois newspapers maintain that the Soviet pacts of non-aggression with Poland and France are directed against Germany. This is not merely untrue, but such a statement is obviously calculated to inflame nationali m, and precipitate a worsening in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.

Has the policy of the Soviet Government been subjected to changes, in connection with the fact that the U.S.S.R. took into account the re-groupings taking place among the imperialist Powers, took advantage of the contradictions between them, and concluded non-aggression pacts with Poland and France?

No, of course not! The Soviet policy has always been designed to *ensure peace* and its treaties were not directed against any other third country.

Is the conclusion of pacts with Poland and France a change of the Soviet attitude towards the Versailles system?

No, it is not. This was explained with perfect clarity by Comrade Stalin, long before the conclusion of the pacts, in his interview with the German Professor Ludwig:

"Is this (conclusion of the pact) a recognition of the Versailles system? No. Is it perhaps a guarantee of the borders? No. We have never been Poland's guarantors, and will never become such, just as Poland has not been, and will not be, guarantor of our borders. . . .

These fears will disappear when we publish the pact, should it be signed with Poland. Everybody will then see that it contains nothing against Germany."

But does this mean that the U.S.S.R. will ever support German imperialism, which is dreaming of a revision of the Versailles system by means of a new imperialist war, a war of revenge? Of course not. The Soviet Union has demonstrated by fifteen years' policy its hostility in principle to all imperialism, and any imperialist war. The Soviet Union has no reason to change its positions. It never connected the prospects of the final collapse of the Versailles system with an outbreak of imperialist clashes. The Soviet Union has always regarded the world revolution of the proletariat as the only thing capable of definitely cutting the Gordian knot of insoluble contradictions in Europe, and throughout the world.

* * *

What is the third lesson and the third cause of the conclusion of the non-aggression pact?

It unquestionably consists in the enormous growth of sympathies for the U.S.S.R. on the part of the workers of the capitalist countries, and the toilers of the entire world.

Is not this the cause of the fact that the Prime Minister of the French Government, this 'son of the people and the toilers" as he styles himself, though, in reality, a representative of the same aggressive French imperialism, suddenly begins to "sympathise with the republic of workers" and admire nothing else than "the socialist construction projected with

such courage and valiance by the republic of workers and peasants."

Of course, this is the cause. Of course, the cause is that :

"Among the great masses of the working-class, outside the boundaries of the Soviet Union, the belief is growing that their better future is inseparably connected with the destinies of the October Revolution and its international prospects."

Of course, the cause is that :

"By no manoeuvres of the pseudo-socialist parties of Europe and America is it possible to hide the growing revolutionary indignation in the masses of the proletarians, who are finally passing over to the side of the international socialist revolutions." (From Comrade Molotov's address to the Congress of Engineers and Technicians.)

The working-class of the whole world has inscribed on its banner the most important demand addressed to its bourgeoisie : "Hands off the Soviet Union."

It has repeatedly demonstrated in the course of its revolutionary struggle, what this slogan means. This has also been demonstrated by the French toilers, when, with Comrade Marty at their head, they started the mutiny in the French imperialist squadron sent to the Soviet Union during the memorable years of the civil war.

The great masses of workers and toilers of the imperialist countries, the workers and peasants of France and Poland particularly, are beginning to realise that their Governments support a new imperialist slaughter, and new intervention against the U.S.S.R. Their resistance and struggle against war grows. The Amsterdam Anti-war Congress,* its tremendous success, testifies the growing struggle of the workers and toilers against the preparation of imperialist wars by the Governments of the capitalist States.

Under the conditions of the transition to the new series of revolutions, the world bourgeoisie cannot but take this determination of the working masses to defend the Soviet Union and carry on a revolutionary struggle against new imperialist wars into consideration. Under these new conditions and in new forms, it cannot but attempt to weaken the determination of the working-class to fight in the defence of the U.S.S.R., and conceal the preparation for imperialist wars and intervention, by lying talk of peace. And the first to aid it in this matter is social-democracy.

By what means does social-democracy seek to achieve this? Firstly, by spreading ever new insinuations and calumnies designed to throw suspicion upon the Soviet Union, in connection with the non-aggression pacts concluded by it, and secondly, by spreading the ideas of imperialist pacifism among the masses.

The "pacifist" variant of the social-democratic agitation is well known to the advanced workers. It is as follows : "The Bolsheviks are fond of shouting about the intervention threatening them. They suffer from a persecution complex even when no one is attacking them. They also shout about an immediate danger of a fresh imperialist war. Is not the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with France and Poland direct evidence of the peaceful policy, even of those capitalist Governments which the Bolsheviks regard as the most aggressive ? "

To this, Comrade Stalin replied on one occasion, with perfect clarity :

"There are some fools who think that if there is imperialist pacifism, there can be no war.

"This is entirely incorrect . . .

"And the most important part about it all is, that *social-democracy is the chief agent of imperialist pacifism in the working-class, hence it is the main support of capitalism in the working-class in the preparation of new wars and interventions.*"

Even now, from the few articles of the social-democratic newspapers it is possible to judge the position of social-fascism on the question of the pacts. Their Press was first dismayed by the obvious successes of the Soviet Union, and maintained a morose silence ; but has now assumed the part of the meanest insinuations. The first to break silence was the "Leipziger Volkszeitung." What did this paper say about the pact ? It said the following :

"The Bolsheviks, as this shows, are able to behave very meekly and be extremely law-abiding to the bourgeoisie. They thereby clearly guarantee the continued existence of capitalist class rule in France."

What does the "meekness" and "law-abiding" spirit of the Bolsheviks consist of, in the view of this corrupt fascist paper ? It consists in the fact that the Bolsheviks are alleged to have renounced, in the treaty, the "economic boycott which Russia applied in its former decrees against France."

But is it not known to the whole world, that it was precisely the French Government of Tardieu, which enforced a number of discriminations against Soviet trade ; putting it in an unequal position as compared with trade with the other countries, which caused the Soviet Union to take measures protecting the U.S.S.R. against such aggression, which is similar to an economic boycott ?

Is not the conclusion of the pact, and the negotiations for a commercial treaty with France, which are to begin soon, evidence of the success of the Soviet Union, which is systematically pursuing a policy of struggle against economic discriminations ?

* See "United Front Against War," British Anti-War Council, 53 Gray's Inn Road, W.C. 1.

Another argument, allegedly showing that the U.S.S.R. "guaranteed the continuation of capitalist class rule in France" is based on the point of the treaty (Article 5) providing for mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of the other country, particularly the pledge to refrain from encouraging "any agitation, propaganda or attempts at intervention aiming to violate the territorial integrity of the other Party, or to alter by force the political or social system of all, or of a part, of its territories."

It is curious, incidentally, that this part of the treaty is quoted by the social-fascist sheet in a falsified form which is designed to show that the U.S.S.R. has undertaken some one-sided obligation towards France.

"The Bolshevist Government has undertaken not to cause, or promote, any agitation pursuing, the object of . . . the violent alteration of the political or social regime of France, or of any part of the territories subject to France."

The real text of Article 5 of the Non-Aggression Treaty between the U.S.S.R. and France reads as follows :

"Each of the high contracting parties undertakes to respect in every sense the sovereignty or rule of the other party over its entire territories defined in Article 1 of this treaty, under no circumstances to interfere in its internal affairs, and particularly to refrain from any action tending to cause or encourage any agitation, propaganda or attempt at intervention designed to violate the territorial integrity of the other party, or to alter by force the political or social system of all, or of a part, of its territories.

"Each of the high contracting parties undertakes in particular to desist from creating, supporting, subsidizing or permitting in its territory either military organisations aiming at an armed struggle against the other party, or organisations, assuming the functions of a government or representative of all, or of a part, of its territories."

Does this article of the treaty demand an alteration of the policy of the Soviet power ? It certainly does not. The Soviet Government has never interfered in the affairs of other countries, and has not permitted the existence, in its territory, of organisations "assuming the functions of a Government" of another country.

On the other hand, this point of the treaty most obviously does not mean that the U.S.S.R. guarantees to the French bourgeoisie the "continuation of its class rule," i.e., guarantees it against the proletarian revolution within the country, or even against the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat under the leadership of the French Communist Party. On the contrary, the Soviet Power has never, and does not conceal now its position in principle to the capitalist structure, does not conceal that the happy future of the international proletariat is inseparably connected with the October Revolution and socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. It is sufficient to read this point of the treaty in order that the complete absurdity and slander of this assertion of the social-fascist sheet should become clear. Only social-democratic scribes, who have lost all sense of truth, could discern anything of this kind, in the fifth point of the treaty. Will not the "Leipziger Volkszeitung" declare in the name of consistency, that French imperialism—for the treaty is mutual in character—"guarantees" the continuation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., and the building of the full socialist society during the Second Five-Year Plan ?

Why do the social-fascists maintain complete silence on the concluding part of this clause, where the pledge to refrain from interference in internal affairs, and desist from propaganda, agitation and intervention is expressed in the concrete obligation not to permit "either military organisations which aim to conduct an armed struggle against the other party, or organisations assuming the functions of government, or of a representative of all, or of a part of its territories" ?

Is it not because this point directly affects the *white guard bands on the territory of France* and the so-called "Governments," from the Governments of the numerous "grand dukes" to the Menshevist Georgian "Government" of Noy Jordania and Tseretelli ?

Of course, this is so. Of course, because the systematic protection and defence of the fragments of the Russian white emigration, constitutes one of the functions of international social-democracy, of its work in covering up the preparation of intervention against the U.S.S.R.

But even more characteristic is the following fact : upon breaking the "sensational" news that the U.S.S.R. has guaranteed the French bourgeoisie the continuation of its class rule, the social-fascist sheet immediately explains this as follows :

"Thus the weakness and impotence of the Communist Party of France, which has not the least influence over the political struggle, is entirely in the interests of Moscow."

This new social-fascist trick shows the dexterity with which the social-fascists use the traditional interventionist formula, saying that the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries, and the Soviet power, are one and the same thing. The social-fascist sheet in maintaining that "the impotence of the Communist Party of France is in the interests of Moscow," to-day pursues the demagogic aim of *discrediting the Soviet Union* in the eyes of French revolutionary

proletarians. *To-morrow* the social-fascists will use the same traditional formula for *provocative* purposes. To-morrow they will say: The French Communist Party continues to work, hence the Soviet Government continues to support it, hence the Soviet Government is violating the treaty. Hence the treaty must be annulled.

This will also serve the cause of preparing the *prohibition of the Communist Party*, of placing it outside bourgeois law, of unleashing white terror against the Communists.

The position of "left" social-democracy differs little from the open anti-Soviet social-democratic agitation discussed above.

The "lefts" do not, of course, carry on the same sort of clumsy, undisguised anti-Soviet work, but disguise it by left" phrases and recognition" of the great diplomatic success of the Soviet Union. But, at the same time, they write:

> "Of course, such treaties, to a certain extent, hamper the revolutionisation of the capitalist world" ("Sozialistische Arbeiterzeitung," Editorial of November 30th).

Obviously, such a formulation serves only one purpose.

It serves the cause of *dampening* the revolutionary sympathies of the world proletariat for the Soviet Union. The right social-democrats do this openly, slanderously attacking the U.S.S.R., which is alleged to "guarantee the capitalist system in France" or "support German imperialism." The "lefts" do this more cautiously, hiding the basic motives of their activity (to dampen the revolutionary sympathies of the proletariat for the U.S.S.R.) under "left" phrases, hypocritically regretting the Soviet "concession" to the capitalists, and the influence of the non-aggression pacts in retarding the revolutionisation of the masses.

But nothing will break the growing will of the world proletariat to support and protect the Soviet Union. Branding with scorn the lying inventions of social-democracy about the Soviet Union, they will reply to the "left" hypocritical "friends" of the U.S.S.R. who actually represent the advance-guard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie: "Can the new successes of the Soviet Union fetter the revolutionisation of the masses? We, the workers of the capitalist world, are developing our counter-offensive against the robbery of our wages, against fascism and against imperialist war. We know full well that the most important thing for successful action is firm confidence in our own forces. Is it not clear that everything testifying to the power of the Soviet Union strengthens the energy of our fighters, instils new courage in the wearied and hesitant, increases our faith in the final victory?"

ERRATUM.—The first sentence on top of page 633, C.I. No. 17-18, should read: "In addition the proposal made by the Berlin Committee to the Social Democratic Party . . . . "

THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNISTS IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

CONCLUSION OF SPEECH BY O. PIATNITSKY

I NOW pass to the third portion of my remarks. A correct definition of the situation at the moment is of great importance.

Our decisions, which have now been tested in practice, have proved to be correct. But how have the decisions of the organs of the Comintern, the R.I.L.U., and of the Central Committees of the Comintern sections themselves, been fulfilled? (*a*) regarding the work within the reformist, catholic, yellow, fascist, and other anti-revolutionary trade unions; (*b*) regarding the obligation of all members of the Party to be members of trade unions; (*c*) regarding the work among the unemployed; (*d*) regarding the transfer of the centre of gravity of party and trade union work to the factories; (*e*) regarding the improvement of the methods of mass work by the lower party and revolutionary organisations; (*f*) regarding the improvement of the methods of leadership of the party orgnaisations by the party organs; (*g*) regarding the work among the women; (*h*) regarding the work among the youth; (*i*) regarding the fluctuation.

Regarding work within the reformist and other anti-revolutionary trade unions. Despite the fact that conditions of labour have greatly deteriorated, wages have been cut; a large percentage of trade union members have remained without work; and the reformist and other non-revolutionary trade unions failed to organise resistance to this degradation, our influence has not grown in these trade unions from the XI to the XII Plenums. This is a fact. On the contrary, our Red trade unions and trade union oppositions have not grown, and we have not captured positions in the reformist, catholic, yellow and other unions. We are marking time in this work. By our failure to carry on day-to-day regular activities within the trade unions, to speak at all conferences, meetings and congresses; to appear with proposals at all the sessions of these trade unions, we help the reformists. The C.P. of France still

refrains from working in the reformist trade unions. The C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia has a couple of thousand members in the reformist trade unions, but no body provides them any leadership. In England and Germany, where the need for working in the reformist trade unions is the greatest, because they are very strong there, things are exceedingly bad. In America something is being done in this respect (among the needle workers and furriers), but far from sufficient. Things in Poland and in China also are not particularly good.

To avoid work in the reformist trade unions some—the sectarians and "left" phrasemongers—either invent themselves, or seek and find in the articles and speeches of some of the leaders of the Communist and revolutionary movement a whole arsenal of little "notions" such as : "the reformist trade unions are a part of the State apparatus," "The reformist trade unions are fascist strike-breaking organisations," "Not only the upper layer, but also the rank and file of the social-democracy and reformists are reactionary," "You cannot change the social-democratic officials and the reformist machine men" (without any sub-division into lower and upper groups), or, for instance, "To urge the trade union bureaucrats to a struggle is opportunism," etc. Yet experience has shown us how it is possible to *force* the trade union bureaucracy, by revolutionary means, to fight.

Take the textile workers' strike in England. It began in Burnley. Fifteen thousand workers started out at night, for the neighbouring town of Nelson, where the Weavers' trade union executive has its headquarters, to demand an extension of the strike from the leaders. And only very recently in Kreuznach, Germany, after our comrades working in the reformist trade unions had carried out a big campaign ; they won a majority in certain unions, and this majority applied to the trades council, and forced the trade union bureacuracy to call a conference of workers against fascism. In the trades council, nineteen voted for, and seven against. Despite the desperate resistance of the trade union bureaucracy, this conference was held.

"The stronger the reformist trade unions, the stronger is capitalism, and vice-versa." This claim is being made generally, without any sub-division into varying countries. And what about the United States ? In America the reformist trade unions are very weak, but capitalism is strong. Obviously, you cannot take such a sweeping view. This may be said about Germany or England, especially when the Labour Party was in power, but it is wrong to apply this to every country indiscriminately.

"You cannot capture the trade union apparatus" (without indicating that what is meant is the central apparatus). But how is this to be applied to those organisations which have actually been captured ? In Germany there were, in 1930 (I do not know how things are to-day) 207 local trade union organisations in which the Communist Party had a majority ; while Comrade Thalmann reported from Czechish sources that there, the entire Motor-Drivers' Union has been captured !

"The reformist trade unions are a school of capitalism, the social-democratic and reformist trade union bureaucrats are Zorgiebels."* "The members of the social-democratic and reformist trade unions are small reactionaries and Zorgiebels." It is interesting to note what a certain social-democratic worker said on this score in the Baden-Pfalz district, at a united front conference of chemical workers called by the revolutionary trade union opposition. He said : "You must distinguish between our members and our leaders. When you say, for instance : ' the reformists have betrayed the workers ' this sounds like a generalisation, and the trade union leaders then tell us rank and file members : ' see how the Communists denounce you.' In reality the rank and file members do not want treachery, but want a struggle." At the end of his speech he made the following plea : "I very much wish that our colleagues, the Communists, would deal with us as gently in the factories as they do at this conference." Is this an isolated case ?

"The reformist trade unions do not conduct strikes, and betray those strikes which break out." This is also said without any concrete indication of just which strikes have been betrayed. Many comrades, who sincerely desire to work in the reformist and other trade unions fear to stand up — at the meetings, conferences, etc.—in these organisations with resolutions, with criticism of the trade union bureaucrats, and with the demand to struggle, for they do not want to fall into opportunism or become "disciples of capitalism." Of course, there are very many Communists, especially among the factory committee members, who are Red in name only, and reformists in reality, who do all the dirty work of the reformists. This is a fact. There are also, in the ranks of the Communist Party, a good many who think in the same way as Brandler and the former conciliationists thought, when they were against the organisation of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition ; and demanded that only the reactionary leaders should be egged on. But how should they be egged on ? In their conception this meant, "to egg on in such a way as to conduct no independent struggle, so that *we would dance to the tune of the trade union bureaucrats.*" There are people of this kind. I have not attempted to estimate which predominate : adherents of the "lefts," or the rights ; but it is a fact that at

* The bloody Social-Democrat Police President.

present all these notions and the so-called "left" theories, merely impede the work in the reformist trade unions, and, at the same time, hamper the struggle against the Right rascalities and their perpetrators in the trade unions. The honest revolutionary workers who fear, and do not want, to commit opportunist errors, prefer not to join the reformist trade unions, or not to carry on any work within them. For this reason all of these "theoryettes" must be cast aside and uprooted.

What does it mean to work inside the reformist trade unions? It means to agitate, to propagate, to move resolutions, to show, by our work that we do better than the reformists, and that the reformists have no monopoly of the routine work, that we, too, are able to work, and to achieve results; to work in the trade unions is to criticise the trade union bureaucrats for their mistakes, to show how to act in each individual case, and why the trade union bureaucrats do not act so, to submit proposals to the leading bodies and demand a vote on them, even knowing beforehand that they will be rejected. But we must see to it that our resolutions should be made known to the masses of the trade unions, and to the workers in general. And then the workers will learn that we have a correct line, that we are doing something. And in order to do all this, it may be necessary to take some measures to egg on the trade union bureaucrats. How is it possible otherwise to work in the reformist trade unions, unless we "egg on" these fakers by submitting our resolutions, and seeking to have them carried into effect. Comrade Thalmann told me last time he was here, that a trade union meeting was held in Chemnitz or Dresden, I do not quite recall, and our people went there and moved resolutions and speeches, and as a result, the trade union bureaucrats received five votes and we received 300 or 400. How else is it possible to work in these trade unions?

Now! What about the capture of the apparatus? We have the decision of the X Plenum (the resolution on the economic struggle and the tasks of the proletariat, section 6, point 4), I will read it:

> "At the same time it would be a harmful opportunist illusion to think that we can, under the present conditions, capture the reformist trade union apparatus, even if the trade union membership support us. But this does not, by any means, lead to passiveness of the Communists and revolutionary opposition at the elections of the trade union leadership. On the contrary, the struggle for driving out of the trade unions all the trade union bureaucrats and capitalist agents, the struggle for each trade union office, especially the struggle for the lower trade union representatives must serve as a powerful weapon for exposing the role of the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy and the struggle against it."

What do our lefts" do? They take the first part of this decision—its first principle that the trade union apparatus cannot be captured. Of course, we cannot capture the All-German Federation of Trade Unions, the central apparatus. If there were such members of the Party who think that we could capture the whole apparatus, say, of the German Metal Workers' Union, which has a membership of 800,000, this would be displaying opportunism on their part. We shall never capture it. Only when a truly revolutionary situation is created, such as existed in 1923, when the membership of the social-democratic party left it in masses; when the trade union members left their organisations in masses; only at such a time, and provided we do not work as we did in 1923, but create a revolutionary bastion within the reformist trade unions, will we be able to attract a considerable section of the membership and complete lower organisations to our side. But under ordinary conditions we will not capture the entire apparatus, this is clear.

But why do the "lefts" cast aside the second part of this paragraph, where it is clearly stated that it is necessary to fight for each elective office. And what is the trade union apparatus? It is not the furniture, not the technical personnel, but the elected leadership. Can we fight for these elective offices, especially in the lower apparatus? We not only can, but must, fight for them.

But how will our members work in the reformist trade unions, if it is wrong to egg on the bureaucrats, because this is opportunism? If the lower apparatus cannot be captured, beginning even with the trade union delegate? What are they to do in the trade union at all, and what stimulus will they have for their work? At this Plenum we must put an end to these "left" notions. It is necessary to declare war upon them. This does not mean that the right danger, as the main danger, no longer exists. But, in this field, there are little "left" notions which are being grasped, which are proclaimed by cowards, who do not want, who fear to work in the reformist trade unions.

Those retreating before the difficulties of work in the reformist trade unions are opportunists. None of them want to work in the trade unions. By this, they leave only the inexperienced members of the Party in the trade unions without leadership, giving a monopoly of the activity within the trade unions to others, which is no different from the work of the reformists, and discredits the Party.

And we shall not move one step, especially in the countries with strong reformist trade unions, unless we begin to seriously and decisively work in the

reformist trade union movement. There is no other way. And we must resolutely adopt this path.

It is precisely because we have not worked in the reformist trade unions, that the trade union opposition is dwindling.

What are the functions of the trade union opposition? It must work within the reformist trade unions. It must organise the unorganised, together with the organised.

It must create an organisational basis, to prepare and carry out independent battles, with the aid of the trade union opposition, which works within the reformist trade unions, so that when a strike begins, or a movement is being prepared, the members of the trade union opposition should "jerk up" the bureaucrats from within, should make propositions in favour of joining and supporting the strike. The trade union opposition has still another task, of no small importance. This is to prepare the organisational basis before the masses come into motion. Take the strike in Belgium, it was started by the revolutionary workers. The tiny Communist Party, which ekes out such a precarious existence, was able to help along in this strike. In some places it even exercised a strong influence over the progress of this strike. And what do you think would have happened in Belgium, if we had had a parallel trade union apparatus, our own strong revolutionary trade union opposition, a mass organisation? Could we not have inflicted on the reformists such a blow in Belgium from which they might not have recovered? And is it not possible to have in all countries to-morrow a situation similar to that which we have in Belgium? For the air is charged with dynamite. Must we have broad mass organisations capable of taking up the leadership of this movement? Yes, we must. And the revolutionary trade union opposition has precisely this function of preparing a ready-made apparatus which is capable of taking up the leadership of the movement at the necessary moment despite the reformist apparatus. And it is not for nothing that all these Brandlers and kidney propose to abolish the revolutionary trade union opposition. This renegade only recently submitted a number of proposals to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., including the proposal to abolish the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany. Then, you see, everything would be O.K. And to our regret, there are still people in this hall who think that the revolutionary trade union opposition represents a barrier to the work in the reformist trade unions. No, the revolutionary trade union opposition must exist, but we must force it to carry out the functions which correspond to its title. In some places it has succeeded in handling a part of its tasks, and we are conducting independent strikes. But it has completely failed to organise the work within the reformist trade unions. And we must say this quite frankly.

Can it be generally said that the reformists do not conduct any strikes; and betray them in all cases? In fifteen countries—Germany, England, the United States, France, Belgium, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Holland, Japan, India, and China—there were, during three years—from 1929 to 1931—18,794 strikes with 8,515,100 participants (according to incomplete figures) involving a loss of 74,768,700 working days. In nine countries—England, France, United States, Germany, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, India, Japan and China—there were, during the first six months of 1932, 2,968 strikes with 1,534,900 participants. The number of working days lost was 9,463,800 (according to incomplete figures).

Who conducted these strikes? We alone? Or only the revolutionary workers? Representatives of all the Parties are here and can answer this question. I think it will be no exaggeration to say that the reformists conducted strikes too.

Can it really be said that they do not conduct any strikes? Incidentally, about the revolutionary workers. We have seen, especially in England (this is not only a Belgian but also an English phenomenon) that the workers of the reformist trade unions carry on strikes—I have not studied this question and do not know whether they always strike against the trade union bureaucrats, despite them, or force them to declare strikes—but does not the fact that they conduct strikes without us, not as a result of our work, of our leadership, prove that we are weak, that we do not work in the reformist trade unions. Otherwise, how could it have happened that the revolutionary workers themselves conduct strikes, while we seek to catch up with them, afterwards. This is also a sign of our weakness. Hence, the strikes are conducted by the reformists under the pressure of the *workers*. Hence, it is wrong to maintain generally that the reformists do not carry on any strikes. By doing this we only repel the reformist workers who themselves participated in strikes.

I will cite an example from the minutes of the Politbureau of the C.P. of America, from Stachell's report at the meeting of the Politbureau, in the middle of July, 1932. From March, to the end of July, the Party led only two strikes: the strike of 18,000 beet plantation workers of Colorado, and the shoemakers' strike in New York. The first strike was lost, the second was won. All the other strikes during this period were conducted by the American Federation of Labour (the most reactionary in the whole world); among them were the miners' strike, the building workers' strike, and the strike of the chemical workers.

In 1931, of the 1,820 strikes conducted in five countries (England, United States, France, Belgium,

Poland), 480 ended in victory (26.37 per cent.), 431 ended in compromises (23.68 per cent.), 775 were defeated (42.89 per cent.), while the result of 134 strikes (7.36 per cent.) is unknown.

Thus some of the strikes have been won. Apparently the reformists, too, conducted strikes with success. Can it be said that they betray strikes everywhere, in all cases, without exception? No, of course not. The reformists, and the social-democrats generally, unquestionably betray the interests of the working-class. This must be proved steadily and patiently. But it is necessary that the members of the Party, Red trade unions and trade union opposition, and the revolutionary workers standing close to them, should not limit themselves in the conversations with members of the social-democratic party, of the catholic, reformist and other trade unions to empty and high-sounding phrases, such as: "Your apparatus is fascist," "You are social-fascists," "You betray the strikes," "You are Zorgiebels," etc. It is necessary to agitate, to convince, to prove by concrete examples and verified facts, and what is more, it is necessary to demonstrate in action that we are able to work and carry on a struggle. It is necessary to cast aside all the high-sounding talk, the unconvincing swear words and nicknames, etc., which interfere with the work in the reformist and other unrevolutionary unions. I recommend you to read the English "Daily Worker." The "Daily Worker" now publishes letters from workers. They are highly characteristic. I have read several of these letters. One worker writes:

> "Such headlines as 'Infamous Role of Anti-Working-Class Labour Leaders,' 'Maxton the Imperialist'..... are far too hysterical and abusive. In regard to the first two, if an I.L.P.er or a Labour Party-ite get hold of the paper, they will think you're mad.'"

Because we do not explain why Maxton is actually pursuing an imperialist policy, why the Labour Party is betraying the interests of the workers, but limit ourselves to screaming headlines, the result of our invective is the very opposite of what we wanted to achieve. Instead of a businesslike agitation and propaganda, based upon verified facts to hand, we merely pronounce loud and empty phrases.

As I have already said, there are still very many manifestations of right opportunism in the trade union work, but, in most cases, they exist side by side with "left" sentiments, they live in peace with them, mutually support and feed each other, the "left" sentiments are still very strong among the opposition members of the reformist trade unions, and among many Communists. We must fight with equal energy both against the "lefts" and against the right distortions of our line in the trade unions. Then we will obtain these results.

The work within the reformist trade unions is also hindered by the fact that not all the members of the Communist Party are members of the reformist trade unions or of trade unions at all, despite the fact that we have passed scores of resolutions to this effect.

Here you have some figures. In the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia 26,094 members recently filed questionnaires. Among them 14,753, or 56 per cent., are not members of trade union organisations. Is not this revolting? I think that in other parties, as well, things are no better, in this respect. It is necessary to give special attention to this matter. Every member of the Party can and must help us in our work in the trade union. This is no less important than going into the street for a demonstration. And I think that the Czech comrades will do very well to ascertain who these 14,000 members are. It is doubtful that they are small peasants, they are more likely to be industrial workers.

I do not propose any new recipes. The old correct decisions of the IV and V Congresses, and sessions of the Central Council of the R.I.L.U. of the X and XI Plenums of the E.C.C.I. and the decisions of the other bodies, of the Central Committees and regional committees of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, regarding the work within the reformist trade unions have not yet been carried into effect.

THE WORK AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED.

I now pass to the question of the unemployed. At the XI Plenum we debated the question of the work among the unemployed. What is the best character to give the organisations of the unemployed? Should we create a broad movement of unemployed with elected committees and a council of unemployed at its head, or should we create a union of unemployed, i.e., relatively isolated organisations? We also agreed regarding the nature of the work. What have we obtained during these one-and-a-half years which passed between the XI and XII Plenums of the E.C.C.I.? The decisions of the XI Plenum, and of the Prague conference on the work among the unemployed, in which the chief sections of the C.I. participated, together with the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition, have not been carried into effect. Moreover, the influence of the Communist Party has declined, and the work among the unemployed has been further neglected.

How is this to be explained? Has the number of unemployed declined? Have they secured benefit? Are they no longer being evicted from their homes? You know that the number of unemployed has increased in every country. In the following countries in which unemployment insurance exists the situation has grown enormously worse:

GERMANY :

(1) The number of unemployed receiving the dole constituted 66 per cent. in 1928 and 19 per cent. in 1932.

(2) The average expenditure per unemployed person per month amounted to 91 marks 41 pfennigs in 1927, and 46 marks at the beginning of 1932.

(3) The contributions made by the workers increased from 3.5 per cent. before August, 1930, to 6.5 per cent. at the present time (since June, 1932).

(4) The period for which the dole is being paid : up to October, 1931, from 26 to 39 weeks. Now (June, 1932) six weeks.

(5) The expenditure on crisis benefits per month per man amounted to 58.90 marks in 1928, and 35 marks 71 pfennigs in March, 1932.

The following groups have been entirely deprived of the dole : youths up to the age of 21, most of the married women, no sickness benefits are paid to those receiving some other form of allowance, the disability pensions have been cancelled in the case of 400,000 persons (1931) and the war invalid pensions in the case of 350,000 persons.

ENGLAND :

(1) Since the end of September, 1931, the dole has been reduced by 100 per cent., the Means Test has been rendered more stringent.

(2) Of the 1,884,074 registered unemployed (February, 1932), 525,537 have been deprived of the dole.

665,008 have had their dole cut.

AUSTRIA :

(1) In the middle of 1931 the dole (for the first and second classes) was reduced by 10 per cent.

(2) The period for which the dole to the unemployed up to the age of 25 is paid, has been reduced from 22 to 12 weeks.

POLAND :

Under the law of March 2, 1932—

(1) The doles have been cut by 50 per cent.

(2) Parents, brothers, sisters, etc., have been deprived of allowances.

(3) The workers' contributions have been increased from 0.5 per cent. to 2 per cent. (those of the employers from 1.5 per cent. to 2 per cent.).

BELGIUM :

The benefits paid by the Government and municipalities have been reduced (in April, 1932) by 30 to 40 per cent. and even by 60 per cent., depending upon the place and population.

The principal methods of the unemployed struggle last year were demonstrations. This year the unemployed display much less readiness to form demonstrations. In Germany for instance, demonstrations have been forbidden. Well functioning committees and councils of unemployed do not exist. The sub-committees attached to the unemployed committees and councils, which it had been decided to create, have not been created. Since the sub-committees do not exist, there is no cultural work among the unemployed, no dining rooms even if for children, no information bureaux where the unemployed might learn whether they have been legally deprived of the dole, etc., there are no centres of work among the unemployed women, youths, among the members of the reformist, catholic and other trade unions, and struggle against overtime and the capitalist rationalisation in the factories. There is no constant struggle against evictions. According to the "New York American" of January 29, 1932, in New York alone 153,731 families were evicted in 1930 and 198,738 families in 1931 (17,000 families per month). Precisely because there is no constant struggle against evictions the workers are moving in masses from their homes to the rubbish heaps, forced to spend the night in hostels, under bridges, on stairs, sidewalks, etc. Instead of developing the broadest struggle, the workers voluntarily leave their homes. There is no struggle at all. The few cases of struggles against eviction mentioned here are isolated instances.

No work is being done in the queues. I have received letters from, and have been told by comrades who have seen with their own eyes the colossal lines for filthy soup and a morsel of bread in America. In France there are queues, and in Germany you have queues near the labour exchanges. They stand silently, no work is being conducted in the queues. I have been told by comrades who have seen with their own eyes workers in the queues of Berlin wearing buttons of the revolutionary trade union opposition, or of the anti-fascist union, who stood silently and did nothing, carried on absolutely no work in the unemployed queues. Where is there a better field for work than the queues ?

The resolution on the non-party mass organisations of unemployed has not been carried out. The R.I.L.U. brigade which investigated the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition in the Ruhr, sent a card here designed for the unemployed. On this card, by which the unemployed person is requested to register, he must sign a pledge to fight against social-democracy, the Centre Party, etc., i.e., the very thing which the E.C.C.I. resolutely rejected last year at the XI Plenum has been carried into effect. The XI Plenum demanded the creation of non-party unemployed organisations. As a matter of fact, even the active members do not know our decisions regarding the unemployed. The same brigade reports that at a conference of twenty responsible instructors of the district, instructors for work among the unemployed, it appeared that only three of the

twenty knew anything about the Prague decisions on the work among the unemployed, that only three had a vague idea of these decisions, and these decisions were not known to the activists.

And not only our decisions. An instructor of the organisational department in the United States writes :—

> "The following fact may serve as an example of how well the Party members read the resolutions. When I was representative of the Central Committee at the recent conference in the Minnesota district, I asked fifty party functionaries who of them had actually read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee in October on the question of the unemployed. Four or five hands were raised to affirm the fact that these comrades had read the resolution."

The fascists, the social-democrats and the reformists are worming themselves in among the unemployed, in order to smash and split the unemployed movement with their work.

If no work is being conducted among the workers in the factories, because it is difficult to work there, why do they not work among the unemployed ? For 50 to 80 per cent. of all the Party members are unemployed. They could surely be organised for this work. It is necessary to achieve a change in the work—among the unemployed.

THE WORK OF THE COMMUNIST CELLS AND TRADE UNION SECTIONS IN THE FACTORIES.

The decisions to shift the centre of gravity of the Party and trade union work to the factories mostly remained on paper. I will cite only a few examples :

In the C.P. of Germany the local groups without factory cells increased from January 1, 1931, to April 1, 1932, from 3,395 to 6,470, the street cells from 3,395 to 6,021, the factory cells from 1,524 to 2,210.

Thus the local organisations without factory cells, and the street cells have grown tremendously, while the rate of growth of the factory cells was far behind that of the local groups and street cells.

In December, 1931, there were 4,021 groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition and Red trade union sections, while in March, 1932, there remained only 3,896. Instead of growing their number is decreasing. And it is surprising that despite the fact that the Central Committee of the German Communist Party and Comrade Thälmann, in his speeches and articles, are strongly pressing upon the Party in order actually to transfer the centre of gravity of the work to the factories, the results are still miserable.

In the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, 13,887 out of 26,094 members subjected to an inquiry on January 1, 1932, were employed (53 per cent.) and 12,207 (47 per cent.) were unemployed. Of the 13,887 employed members 3,867 or 14 per cent, belonged to factory cells, while 17,247, or 67 per cent. belonged to local groups which had no cells and 4,980, or 19 per cent., belonged to street cells.

What, then, has changed during these eighteen months ? Absolutely nothing. We have conducted a struggle in France against the so-called "attached to the cells." Here we take their cell statistics showing these attached. The cell of Fuin in the first Paris district has twenty-five members, of whom one works in the factory, and the others are attached. In the cell of the S.F.R.P.I., Nanter, in the district of Puto, there is not one member who is employed in a factory, all are attached. In the Farman airplane works, one is employed in the factory and seven are attached. This is also called a factory cell. I will not quote the figures of the other legal parties for things are no better there than in the French Party.

Both in Germany and in the other capitalist countries, the work of the factory groups and cells itself is even worse than the number of cells. Many of them exist on paper only. Of those which do exist, many do not work. In many cases, the Parties or the Party organs themselves hamper work of the cells. One of the R.I.L.U. brigades, of which I have spoken, reports on the Zeiss factory in Vienna. The comrades who live in Vienna and work at Zeiss have practically no time for work in the factory (which employs 3,400 persons). These comrades are used as speakers at the meetings, held along residential lines or are generally transferred to work in the places where they live.

The latest events in Germany have shown how difficult it is to get the factories and mills to strike, when there are no efficient organisations in the factories.

How have the decisions to improve the work of the cells and the groups of the Red trade unions ; of the sub-district, district and city committees of the Party ; of the revolutionary trade union organisations, and the methods of leadership of the lower organisations, by the Party and trade union organs, been carried out ? In every country, and even in many cities, there are individual cells and local organisations which work splendidly, and which, therefore, lead the majority of the workers of the factories, and even of the district. Unfortunately, compared with the amount of poor work and poor organisations, their number is very small. But I cannot agree with Comrade Kuusinen, who said that he looked for examples of good work in a factory for a long time and still could not find any. I know of quite a number of such examples. It cannot be said that we have no improvement in this respect. I must say that if we take mere numbers, without regard to the moment which we are passing through, without regard to the demands which it imposes upon us, then at this Plenum, I have heard

some speeches which greatly rejoiced me. Compare Gottwald's speech at the XI Plenum with his speech at this one !

Is it possible to compare these two speeches ? He came out and spoke about things which have been spoken of in the Comintern, and even done for a long time. But he told us how they worked, and it may be said that through his mouth life itself, real life, spoke here in this hall. It is only a pity that Comrade Gottwald made things appear worse than they are, in reality, among them. He developed the thought that it was necessary to listen to the masses, that it was necessary to take up their slogans, he went too far, exaggerated somewhat, and the picture of how we must really act turned out to be incorrect.

The point is that while listening to these masses, while bringing out what makes them smart, what they want, while fighting for their demands, we must raise their struggle to a higher stage, connecting it up with the current politics, with the ultimate aims of the Party. He failed to say this here. Yet they have good experience, in Brux they have actually done this. They began with an economic strike and went over to a political strike, drawing into it, not only the miners, but the other industries as well. They committed one great error. They hid the face of the Party. In speaking here Comrade Gottwald also attempted to prove that this was a normal thing. It is true that we are against advertising the fact that we Communists are leading, directing, without doing anything. This is what many of our Parties are frequently doing. But we stand for the Party; whenever it does something and leads the masses, not hiding the fact of being Communists. Such were the defects of Comrade Gottwald's speech. But the speech itself shows that there is already a definite turn towards mass work, and I certainly greet this fact. I was very pleased with this. Comrade Pollitt's speech, likewise, was much more concrete than his past speeches. He spoke this time of concrete strikes. He spoke of work in the reformist trade unions ; something that we did not hear before. In any case, previously we used to talk, while he used to listen (not he alone, by the by), and now he spoke, while we listened with pleasure (laughter). This should be pointed out.

I will not speak of to-day's speech of the Belgian comrade. I have already mentioned the fact that even a little Party, when it begins to do things promptly, achieves great results. I am not sure whether our Belgian Party will succeed in taking advantage of the present situation, in consolidating the successes. I do not know this, I am not quite sure of it, the French Party must help the Belgian comrades consolidate the present degree of influence. I think that the Comintern, too, can help ; and help a good deal, in order that the Party in Belgium might consolidate the influence which it has gained there.

I now pass to some good examples :—

GERMANY. A.E.G. Henningsdorf. There are about 1,500 workers there. The factory section of the Red trade union of metal workers of Berlin reacted to the smallest requirements, and has grown, in a short space of time, from 250 to 315 members. In the preparation for the political twenty-four-hour protest strike, the section succeeded in getting all but 200 workers to join the strike.

A month later thirty-three workers of the welding machine factory, members of the reformist union of metal workers, carried out passive resistance to reduction of wages under the leadership of the section of the Red union ; the administration made concessions, agreeing to pay for the time spent by the workers awaiting issue of piece work also. The section of the Red trade union then organised passive resistance in the tool department, against the 15 per cent. wage-cut and was successful here also.

Once again the section of the Red trade union successfully organised passive resistance in the press department (135 workers) when the company attempted to cut the piece rates in the production of radio cabinets, with the result that the old piece rate was retained. All this work caused a split among the reformist members of the factory committee (from the materials of the R.I.L.U. brigade, which investigated the A.E.G. Henningsdorf plant).

What does this prove ? It proves that even during a crisis, in the presence of tremendous unemployment, if there is an initiative group, which sees to it that at least the collective agreement should be observed, the workers follow them, even the reformist workers. Whenever we do something in the factories and shops, we can defeat the reformists. It is certainly not a trifle when all the factories around do not strike ; while our Party cell and revolutionary trade union opposition succeed in organising a twenty-four-hours strike, during which only 200 out of 1,500 workers remain on the job. This was a tremendous success, and such successes could be achieved everywhere, if only we worked properly. This example shows us also the necessary method of work, the proper approach to the workers ; not by shouting, not by general political slogans which do not explain anything, but by concrete work based upon the needs existing in the factories and mills. This is the way to mobilise the workers for political action.

Unless you do this you will not move a single step forward. This is frequently not understood by the leaders, even by those attending the Plenums of the E.C.C.I. Otherwise, they would be treating the work in the factories differently, they would be treating the question of the work in the factory and in the trade unions differently.

ENGLAND. In the Cowlairs factory in Glasgow (2,500 workers, the cell has nine members), the cell put forward the demand that the basis of calculation of piece work should be explained to the workers, also that the workers should control the fixing of piece rates, and that wages should be paid according to collective agreement. After the rejection of these demands by the manager, the cell got several hundred workers to stop work, and attracted the other departments to the movement, forcing the management to make concessions. As a result, the influence of the cell greatly increased, and the next issue of the factory newspaper had to be reprinted (from the report of the organisational instructor in England).

In the Troedyrhiw colliery (South Wales) immediate demands were put forward affecting wages, firewood and better ropes. One good letter from the pit, published in the "Daily Worker," was sufficient to occasion a strike, which ended successfully. The cell then issued a leaflet with new demands (for firewood, for the blowing of the whistle at the end of the day, without delay) and the management immediately gave way (report of the organisational instructor in England).

Now regarding the Lucas factory, about which Comrade Kuusinen spoke.* The strike took place in a factory employing 15,000 workers. This means something. The C.P. of Great Britain and the Minority Movement gained a very serious victory there, but they failed to utilise it. Instead of immediately issuing the policy to elect a factory committee, create a trade union group, and consolidate the influence, which had been gained, they started a discussion in the "Daily Worker," and in the Party organisations, urging that the workers must not join the reformist union, that a new union should be created, that Minority Movement groups should be formed, etc. While they continued the discussion they lost the influence which they had gained. The English comrades were counselled to stop the useless and futile discussion, and to elect a factory committee. They created a factory committee, but everybody had lost interest in it. The factory committee was not used to organise the work in this great factory, it kept silent, and was inactive, and consequently lost its influence. It was not enough to acquire an influence, it was necessary to consolidate it. Leadership was absent, where it was necessary.

And here are some facts of poor work. Unfortunately, there are more of these than of good work:

A.E.G.—BRUNNENSTRASSE. This factory has been regularly putting off workers. Our group of the revolutionary trade union opposition did nothing against this. The Communist workers, members of the Party, declared that nothing can be done about these dismissals. The workers, therefore, have little confidence in this section of the Red trade union. Here, it was clearly revealed that our conduct was no different from that of the reformists. (Report of the R.I.L.U. brigades.)

LEUNA. The trade union group in the factory has made no attempt to utilise every occasion for the development of the struggle. The group does not react to the various events in the factory. Four weeks ago an accident occurred in one of the shops. The group limited itself to a note in the newspaper. Nothing else was done. Nothing at all was done in connection with the movement against Brüning's "Notverordnung"* last January. The committee of struggle and unity, which had been elected did not react in any way to the wage-cut. (Report of the R.I.L.U. brigades.)

In the Berlin Transport Co. ("Verkehrsgesellschaft") there are thirty-one cells with 285 members, and forty groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition with 1,137 members. In the main shops at Uferstrasse, of the 670 workers, 300 are social-democrats. For a full year the cell, and the group of the revolutionary trade union opposition did nothing but collect dues. Some of the comrades became acquainted for the first time only when general meetings of the cell, and of the groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition began to be called.

The Communist workers debated whether it was possible to distribute the newspaper inside the factory (formerly they distributed it outside the factory); finally, they decided that this could be done. They began to distribute the paper inside the factory. This was noted in one of the shops by a steward of the reformist trade union, who split on our comrade. What was the result? The reformist workers supported our comrade and demanded that the informer should be removed from his post. The cell did nothing, limiting itself to the distribution of the factory paper, and even then, it immediately secured the support of the workers. This fact has also been taken by me from the materials of the investigating brigade. The report of the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany on the "Bochumer Verein" cell says: There are thirty-nine members in the cell out of a total of 5,800 workers; the opportunist tendencies are strong. Despite the worsening of the situation of the workers the cell failed to pursue the policy of partial struggles. Its initiative is very weak, it could not beneficially affect the factory group of the revolutionary trade union opposition (thirty-six people). No concrete struggle was conducted in the factory against the social-democrats, the centre and the Nazis.

*See "The International Situation." O. Kuusinen. M B. W.L.P.

* Emergency Decree.—Ed.

ENGLAND. The textile workers' strike of 1932 (in the Manchester district). The work at the factory gate was very weak and we had to take corresponding measures. The strike broke out a week before the Party mobilised its forces. It took four or five days of patient work to establish a closer contact with these workers. In no case could we say that, as a result of our work, a strike has been prepared. The Party appeared on the arena after the struggle had already been in progress. (From the minutes of the Politbureau of the C.P. of England, of June 25, 1932.)

I could cite until morning information on all the Parties, so poorly is the work of the cells and of the leadership handled. I will only limit myself to reading one big letter published in the "Daily Worker" (of America). This letter was commentated in the paper. This is progress, but what sort of commentary was it? (laughter). The comment did not contain the answer to the problems raised in the letter:

June 3, 1932.

Dear Comrades,

I don't know you, I don't know your address even, but am using the Finnish Workers' Federation as a medium for sending you this letter. As you are well aware, the situation in this country is getting desperate. Masses are getting ready to open revolt, unemployment, worry and in many cases open starvation is driving them to that point. But, THE MASSES LACK LEADERSHIP. It was a fashion of the Social-Democratic Party tens of years ago, and still is, to make a revolution in theory, and behind closed doors. The Communist Party seems to follow, to a great extent, the footsteps of the aforesaid party, as far, at least, as this locality, the Wyoming Valley, which includes Wilkes-Barre, Pa., is concerned.

In this locality there are between 300,000 and 350,000 people. And to the Communist Party only 200 people belong! Why?

When a person goes to sleep he is still living all right. But he is not doing anything—he is just sleeping. That's what the Communist Party local organisation is doing here. It is a grave accusation, I know, but I will herewith prove the same, then you may use your own judgment.

I have tried for a long time to know where the Communist Party headquarters are in this region. Several weeks ago a Finnish comrade took me there. Nobody was in, although it was 10 a.m. I called there again the next day at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. This time there was the secretary and organiser. I had a long talk with the organiser. I gave him my opinion as to what should be done here, and it was —and still is—TO ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED, which the Communist Party here has failed to do. This is a golden opportunity for the Communist Party, if it only realises this fact.

Well, the comrade seemed to be lukewarm to my proposition. I told him one organiser is not enough here, we need hundreds of them, and I'm willing to be one, and I told him I would like to join the Communist Party. He told me that there are some other comrades in my city and that he is going to organise a nucleus here, and he promised to come to see me some day.

However, as I am out of work, have been all this year and almost all of last year and a goodly part of the year 1930, you don't blame me if I'm a bit impatient, and even desperate? I can't spend my time idling any longer. I have to do something! And the only something there is to do is to talk to other unfortunates. And one can meet them anywhere now. I have talked to a good many of them and to different nationalities. A Finnish comrade gave me three copies of the "Noon Hour Talk" pamphlet. I distributed them with the request to pass them to somebody else after it was read.

I called again at the headquarters. I told the comrade what I had done. He said it was all right. He gave me three additional "Noon Hour Talk" pamphlets, besides a couple of dozen leaflets of a coming mass meeting in Luzerne, Pa., where delegates were to be elected to go to the National Communist Party Convention in Chicago. (This was a couple of weeks ago.) I distributed the leaflets and the booklets and had long talks with different individuals. Within a week I took the names and addresses of five different persons, three of them prospective members of the Communist Party, who were ready to join and also ready to subscribe to the "Daily Worker." I took all these names to the headquarters. As nobody was in, I wrote a note and dropped it in through the hole in the door. I urged them to go after these persons and finish the work I had started. Afterward I saw some of these men and asked if anybody had come to see them. Every time the answer was in the negative. I felt like a salesman might feel who was selling bad stock and had apprehended them. I have tried several times to get into the headquarters, before noon, afternoon, early and late, and nobody was ever in. Make your own conclusions.

The unemployed here are ready to be organised, ready to do anything. We only lack the leader. As they themselves say, is Lenin only a picture here and his teachings only—well—a beautiful theory? Why not strike when the iron is hot? Capitalists fear nothing more now than that the unemployed be organised. Why does not the Communist Party take the leadership? J.N.

I am convinced that this letter expresses the sentiments of more than one person. This is the cry of an unemployed man seeking leadership. And, after this, it is not surprising that for the last five years we have had a total of 9,000 members in the Party no matter how many new members—whether 10,000 or 15,000—were admitted per year, the membership remained stationary just the same.

As if someone has ordered them never to go beyond that figure.

This letter speaks for itself, and needs no comments.

However, I cannot help stating that had the leading organs of the C.P. of the United States, and the revolutionary trade union organisations improved the work of the Party and trade union bodies ; had they organised and led the struggle of the unemployed ; the C.P. of the United States could not only have become a mass Party, but could have actually developed into the leader of the millions of both unemployed and employed workers.

How little is required, in order that the workers should respond to the call of the Party and trade union organs may be illustrated by several facts.

The tailoring shop of Lockwood & Bradley, England, employs 300 workers. Two Party members working there took up the organisation of a struggle for the small demands of the workers (misbehaviour of foremen, etc.). In this way, they succeeded in acquiring an influence in one section of the factory where the workers were not even in unions. Several weeks later, every department elected a representative to the shop committee, led by these two Party members, and its influence has grown from day to day on the basis of the struggle for the everyday demands of the workers.

The Party cell of the "Crypto" factory in London (300 workers) published several demands against rationalisation measures in the shop paper. These demands were vigorously discussed by the workers. The third number of the paper was bought by more than 200 workers. The employer was forced to make concessions, only because of the note published in the paper. After this the paper began to receive notes from the non-party workers, containing complaints, reports, etc. (From the report of the organisational instructor in England.)

"When we arrived in the Ruhr district," writes the head of the R.I.L.U. brigade, "we learnt from our Press that the Hesch factories were being closed for two weeks. I became interested in the matter, and asked the local leader of the revolutionary trade union opposition what had been done by the opposition to mobilise the masses against the closing of the factory. He told me that he knew nothing about it. I received a similar reply from the secretary of the Party committee. On the same day I called together the group of the revolutionary trade union opposition. Twelve active members came, and it was then revealed that the factory had already been closed for four days. No one was able to explain the reasons for the closing of the plant. It appeared that the revolutionary trade union opposition had called a meeting of the workers two days before the closing of the factory. Everybody knew that the factory would be closed. Various matters were discussed at the meeting, but not a word was said regarding the closing of the factory.

Detailed proposals were prepared for the factory committee demanding a general meeting of the workers to discuss the question of compensation for the two weeks during which the factory was to be closed. At the meeting of the factory committee the reformists rejected our demands, but two of their members voted together with us.

The vote stood nine to nine. The meeting could not be called. A leaflet was written, but it was not published in time. Several notes were published in the Press. The workers in the factory began to discuss the question, and this little pressure was enough to force the management to post a notice that these workers (and their number exceeded 1,500) who were not legally entitled to receive the benefits for partially employed would each get compensation from 10 to 15 marks. Complete blindness regarding the mobilisation of the masses and reacting to what is taking place in the factory." I have already mentioned the source of this report.

The poor work of the lower Party and trade union bodies is only possible because the higher Party and trade union leadership insufficiently, and in many cases poorly leads, while, in a good many cases, it does not provide any leadership at all, does not furnish instructions, or control the work of the lower Party and trade union organisations.

THE WORK AMONG THE WOMEN. The work of the C.P. among the women is still very weak. The percentage of women in the factories during the crisis has increased. The capitalist offensive is directed with special force against the women (wages and unemployment benefits have been cut). The working women and the workers' wives feel the effects of the crisis with particular severity. In case of war, the women will take the places of men in the factories and the Communist Parties will have no contact with them. Still, our decisions on the work among the women, especially about the creation of delegate meetings, have not yet been carried out by the sections of the Comintern. This fact must be noted.

THE YOUTH. The youth is increasingly replacing the adult workers in the factories during the crisis. The youth has been deprived of unemployment benefit, the wages of the young workers, like those of the women, have been subjected to particularly

drastic cuts. The young workers represent an active element, they receive no leadership from the Communist Parties and Youths' Leagues and they therefore go to the fascists. The youth has no strong traditions of the social-democratic or other parties, so that the work of the Communists among the young workers is easier than among the old workers. The Communist Parties must give special attention to the work among the youth, and help convert the Young Communist Leagues into mass organisations, about which so much was said in the presidium meetings of the E.C.C.I. several years ago, about an improvement in the work, about widening the Y.C.L.'s, about a change in their work. The Young Communist Leagues do not get any assistance from the Parties, most of the decisions have remained on paper.

Is it surprising after all this, that the fluctuation of the membership has not decreased ? I will cite only a few figures.

In Czecho-Slovakia 36,050 new members were enrolled during 1931. Of these only 9,000 remained who pay dues.

In February, 1932, there were 60,000 registered members, though there should have been 85,000 (at the end of May there were 70,000—75,000 registered and 55,000—60,000 dues paying members).

The Red trade unions had at the beginning of 1931 60,234 members. Between May 1, 1931, and January, 1932, 25,425 new members joined the unions making 86,659.

On February 15, 1932, there were 75,000 members, so that about 50 per cent. of the new members had withdrawn.

GERMANY. In the fourth quarter of 1931 there were 246,554 dues paying members, and during the first quarter of 1932 another 94,365 members were admitted.

There should have been 246,554+94,365=340,919 there actually were 287,180 dues paying members, which means that 53,739 people left the Party in three months.

In the other Parties, Red trade unions and trade union oppositions, the fluctuation of membership is just as bad. You cannot get rid of this fluctuation if the Party and the trade union organisations fail to improve their work. The decisions on this question remained for the most part on paper just like those to which I referred before.

COMRADE STALIN ON THE TASKS OF PARTY LEADERSHIP.

In 1924, in the Polish commission of the E.C.C.I., Comrade Stalin gave the following definition on the tasks of party leadership :

> Finally the question of Party leadership. What is the characteristic feature of the development of the Communist Parties of the West at the present moment ? It consists in that the Parties have closely approached the question of rebuilding the Party practice along new revolutionary lines. It is not a question of adopting the Communist programme and proclaiming revolutionary slogans. It is a question of rebuilding the daily work of the Party, its practice in such a direction, that every step of the Party, and everyone of its actions should naturally lead to the revolutionary education of the masses, to the preparation of the revolution. Such at present is the crux of the question, rather than the adoption of revolutionary directives.
>
> "Comrade H. (I omit the name of the comrade mentioned by Comrade Stalin) read here yesterday a whole sheaf of revolutionary resolutions adopted by the leaders of the C.C. of Poland. He read these resolutions with the air of a victor, believing that Party leadership consists in working out resolutions. He does not even realise that the working out of resolutions is merely the first step, the beginning of Party leadership. He does not understand that the basis of leadership consists not of working out resolutions, but of carrying them into effect, of putting them into action. In his big speech he therefore forgot to tell us the fate of these resolutions, he did not deem it necessary to say whether these resolutions have been carried into effect and in what measure they have been carried out by the Communist Party of Poland. Yet the essence of Party leadership consists precisely of carrying out resolutions and directives." ("The Bolshevik," No. 11, 1924.)

How many more times will we adopt resolutions without carrying them into effect ?

To fulfil the revolutionary tasks confronting the Communist Parties in the revolutionary trade union movements of capitalist countries, and end the lagging behind, it is necessary, not in words but in action :

(*a*) To transfer the centre of gravity of the Party and trade union work to the factories,
(*b*) To resolutely strengthen the work within the reformist, catholic, yellow and fascist trade unions, to free the working masses who still follow the reformists, from their influence, and thereby improve the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition,
(*c*) To strengthen the work of the Red trade unions, and of the Red trade union opposition,
(*d*) To take up the work among the unemployed in real earnest,
(*e*) To improve the methods of mass work of the Communist Parties, Red trade unions and trade union opposition,

The Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movements of the capitalist countries will then succeed in capturing the majority of the working class, and successfully conducting the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

THALMANN.

COMRADES, it is easy to understand that in view of the daily more-accentuated economic crisis and the high state of political tension in various countries, as a result of the acceleration of the revolutionary upsurge, why a special discussion on the problem of economic struggles, a number of tactical questions in the sphere of our mass trade union political work and questions of inner-trade union practice should have been superseded at this plenum, by the discussion of political problems. Every delegate will agree with me, when we say that the discussion of the XII Plenum has provided all sections with a new wealth of knowledge and experience in struggle.

The Czecho-Slovakian delegation, in particular Comrade Gottwald, have, for example, shown us some brilliant practical examples of the tactics of the united front, of new and special methods of approach to the sections of non-Party and Social-Democratic workers, and those organised in trade unions, which should lead to an improvement in our revolutionary mass work.

It must, at the same time, be realised, that our tactics in the question of economic struggles and political mass strikes, in conjunction with the preparations for the decisive struggles for the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the experiences which have been gained in individual countries, cannot be transferred in a routine way to other sections. The resolutions which we are adopting here should not be taken over in a schematic way in the individual capitalist and colonial countries, but must be concretely applied according to the given situation.

We must not overlook the fact that economic strikes are interwoven with political mass strikes. We must at the same time consider that the stages of development of the revolutionary movement are continually changing, that they are changing through the increasing difficulties of the bourgeoisie and the further deepening of the crisis. It depends on us; how the revolutionary preparedness of our Party develops, and in how far our Parties succeed in mobilising the masses of the working class against the capitalist offensive of the bourgeoisie.

The tempo at which the general revolutionary upsurge is taking place in the different countries, varies considerably in accordance with the changed conditions characterising the end of capitalist stabilisation. Our policy must be adapted concretely to suit these conditions from time to time.

We can register the fact that the character of the struggles, in the present situation is changing more rapidly than was the case during the past epoch. We must observe to-day, that, especially in those capitalist countries in which the crisis has already reached a very high level, every strike, and, in particular, the political mass strike, has a specific, much higher significance, than formerly. This fact must also be taken in connection with the greater activisation of the Party, and of the revolutionary trade union movement. To-day, the end of the period of capitalist stabilisation, the strike, and in particular, the political mass strike, swings the relation of forces much more powerfully in favour of the working class. A number of new forms of struggle have appeared in all countries. Precisely in the province of economic struggles, we have new and international experience. The method of passive resistance, the fact that economic struggles, in connection with political strikes, and the political strikes themselves, are becoming ever more frequent, the fact that individual economic struggles are followed by sympathetic and demonstration strikes on the part of other enterprises, the ever more violent collisions with the state apparatus in these struggles, and besides this, the strikes which involve seizure of the factories—all these facts are of the greatest international significance. In addition to this, we have the new anti-war strikes in individual countries, above all in Japan and in China, which are of extraordinary importance for all sections of the Comintern.

In Germany we can further record cases where the workers who are still employed, have come out on strike in support of the unemployed. In various branches of industry in Poland and Belgium, where individual industrial groups came out on strike, other industrial groups expressed their solidarity with the strikers by strike decisions. We can already record political mass strikes, which, in many countries, contained the elements of civil war. Further, the strike struggles and political mass strikes perceptibly accentuate the contradictions and differences within the camp of the bourgeoisie; they increase in violence and pertinacity, they accentuate the crisis which is beginning in the camp of the Second, and of the Amsterdam International, and create new prerequisites for our mass influence

among the millions of workers organised in trade unions.

Whereas formerly strikes took place only in individual enterprises for the most part, in the majority of cases only in small and medium-sized enterprises, while great and political mass strikes whole branches of industry were only isolated phenomena, we can observe to-day that whole branches of industry, in some cases several industrial branches together, are affected by strikes and general strikes.

The art of our strike tactics must consist in:

1. Adapting the daily demands and political slogans promptly to the changing objective and subjective conditions, for the higher development of the revolutionary class struggle.

2. Formation of an extended mass front of struggle by skilful linking-up of economic and political strikes.

3. Displaying the greatest possible manœuvring ability and striving to raise the movement to a higher revolutionary level.

4. Exhausting all possibilities of bringing the masses to realise the inevitability, and necessity, of the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

5. With greater pertinacity and conviction to combine courageous and audacious use of the policy of the united proletarian front from below, with the correct methods of proletarian democracy, for the systematic winning over of the Social-Democratic, unorganised and organised workers from the sphere of influence of their Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders.

6. Working out the leading rôle of the Communist Party, and the revolutionary trade union organisations, and their leadership, while representing the class interests of the proletariat.

7. Swiftly and ruthlessly unmasking and fighting against the treacherous "Left" manœuvres of the Social-Democratic-reformist trade union bureaucracy.

8. Strengthening the position of the revolutionary trade union movement (such as the R.G.O.,* opposition movements, and Red Unions) as also that of the Communist Parties, and the Young Communist League in the enterprises.

The various speakers of almost all sections, and the comrades who work in the revolutionary trade union organisations, have emphasised here, with a special sharpness, the manifold and treacherous "Left" manœuvres of the Amsterdam International and of Social-Democracy.

The social-demagogy, and the special "Left" manœuvres, of the Amsterdam and Social-Democratic leaders, which are employed by them to rivet those of their own adherents who are ready to go over to Communism, to the Second and the Amsterdam International, compels us to make timely recognition, of the great danger of Right opportunism in our ranks, as representing the main danger—the danger of deviating from the correct Bolshevik line — and to open a struggle against this. This should in no way diminish the intensity of the struggle against "Left" sectarian deviations.

The brutal wage-cutting decrees in Germany are being issued under the motto of a "programme for providing work"; this is to carry through the predatory plans of the Papen government more easily. The measures for granting state aid to, and financing large-scale industry, and the great landlords, are declared by the bourgeoisie to be "measures taken to produce a boom," as a means for the "overcoming of the crisis." These facts, and the treacherous "Left" manœuvres of the P.P.S. in Poland mentioned here, prove that only the daily and tireless unmasking, and the daily indefatigable and pertinacious mass struggle against every "Left" manœuvre and against the social-demagogy of the Social-Democrats, the Amsterdam International, and all the enemies of the workers, will promote the class consciousness of the working class, strengthen our authority, and more and more arouse and stimulate the initiative for independent leadership in the struggle.

Now the question: How can we more rapidly approach the million masses of workers.

The fact that the economic basis for the aristocracy of labour has become attenuated, the fact of the growth of opposition tendencies, and over and above this, all the revolutionary factors connected with the revolutionary upsurge, present us with new and favourable prerequisites for our work among the masses. The struggle must be carried on, on the inner trade union front, above all in the factories, and among the unemployed. In the mass strike in Belgium, we witnessed, in its most clearly visible form, the deepest indignation of the workers, in particular of the workers organised in trade unions, against the class betrayal of the reformist bureaucracy. The information given us by our Belgian comrades that the Belgian mass strike was led and directed by the masses themselves, that is to say, by the unorganised workers jointly with those organised in trade unions, by a new revolutionary active group, by new cadres of workers, who were placed at the head of the struggle, by the masses themselves in the heat of the strike is of the utmost importance.

*Revolutionare Gewerkschafts Opposition. (T.U. Opposition.)

We must see to it, first and foremost, that our own comrades in the Communist Parties overcome those inner obstacles which still hamper the carrying out of the inner trade union work. Chief among these obstacles are, generally speaking:

Firstly, an underestimation of the militant capacity of the organised workers ("You can't do anything with them").

Secondly, however, we have a simultaneous overestimation of the degree of maturity attained by the organised workers, often expressed in such phrases as: "They will come over to us of their own accord."

Thirdly, many comrades are afraid of coming sharply to grips with the bureaucrats in the various trade unions, since they feel themselves insufficiently developed and not strong enough politically.

It is not a question of doing what we did for too long in Germany — of drawing up bureaucratic six-monthly plans, and paper projects for "storm plans" or of working out elaborate systems of points; this will not get us much further, and not forward. What we need is a direct and systematic revolutionary mass work.

The Plenum was right in attaching great importance precisely to the question of inner-trade union work. I must say, however, that in this connection, the problem of the unorganised workers has been scarcely touched upon during the whole discussion, and has claimed far too little of our attention. In the present Belgian strike, we have seen how the unorganised workers are playing an important part, by their revolutionary co-operation with the organised workers. I remind you once again of the highly significant explanations which were laid before the presidium of the E.C.C.I. at the VI World Congress during the discussion on the German question. It was Comrade Stalin who on that occasion—and this holds good in full measure for the present situation as well—made especial reference to the great revolutionary rôle and importance of the unorganised workers.

In all countries there has been a strong growth of the urge of the masses towards unity, on the basis of the new situation.

Within the working class itself, this urge towards unity has brought with it much vagueness, and many dangerous illusions which are especially strong, on occasions when the wishes and expectations of many workers, with regard to the tempo of development of the united front, are not satisfied. In this sphere we have had great experience in Germany. As a result of Nazi terrorism there were strong feelings to be met with, in favour of unity, but there were also such dangerous conceptions as "unity over the heads of *all* leaders!" or such conceptions as "unity over all parties!" or "the achievement of unity at any price." The S.A.P.,* this "Left" branch of Social-Fascism, together with the Brandlerites and Trotskyists in Germany, put forward the slogan of union of the S.P.D.† and the K.P.D.," to divert the desire for unity among the masses into false political channels. When such demands are rejected on principle by the Communist Party, there is sometimes a feeling of dissatisfaction among the masses which is quite consciously fostered by renegades, by the S.A.P. and sometimes even by certain sections of the Social-Fascists. This feeling has also been temporarily fostered by making preparations in the Party in individual cases, for joint demonstrations, etc., which were not in accord with its revolutionary nature and by which the character of the K.P.D., as opposed to the Social-Democratic Party in principle, was temporarily weakened and obscured. This gives rise to incorrect conceptions, of every sort and kind, on the policy of the united front. For example: "The leaders of both Parties, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, bear the blame for the failure of the united front." Such tendencies often penetrate into the outskirts of the Party and are capable of doing the Party the greatest harm in decisive situations. Thanks to the vigilance of the German Central Committee, the mistakes made, in the use of the policy of the united front from above, have been vigorously criticised and effaced to prevent fresh difficulties, in the carrying out of a revolutionary mass policy. At the elections we could everywhere record great progress, in cases where we had carried out a correct and courageous policy of the united front from below among the masses. This greatly strengthened the authority of the Party among the masses.

We must now raise the question: What is the main lever in mobilising and activising the masses for the carrying out of a united front from below? The decisive method in the use of the policy of the united front, the formation of the united front from below, is the common militant mobilisation of the free trade union, Social-Democratic, Christian and unorganised workers for the struggle for the common demands of the working class. In this we do not raise the question of our leadership as a "condition." The more strongly we raise the question of the policy of a united front *from below*, the more easily will we efface the Right errors which are made in turning the

*"Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei." Corresponding to British I.L.P.

†Social-Democratic Party. K.P.D. Communist Party.

united front into a policy from above; which has sometimes been committed by certain sections of Party members and certain functionaries under the impression that this might strengthen our position among the masses—a purely instinctive conception.

In the discussion here, on the question of how to apply the policy of the united front, there were one or two vague formulations. Our rôle of leader in all the strikes, whether, as has often been the case, they break out spontaneously, or whether they have been organised and launched by us, or whether again, the reformists called the strike under pressure from the masses—our leading rôle must not, anywhere, or at any time, be underestimated. Comrade Piatnitsky* was right in saying: If we are already leading the masses, then we should also emphasise: it is we Communists who are leading you in the struggle for wages and bread.

That is perfectly correct. These are facts to which we must pay the greatest attention in applying the policy of a united front from below, to win over the masses for still higher revolutionary tasks, under the leadership of the Party. If we do not do this, how shall we then lead the masses to higher class aims in this changed situation? During strikes and demonstrations among the masses the face of the Party, the leading rôle of the Party, must not be obscured or hidden. We put forward the slogan of the united front, not that of fusion. If we speak, for example, in Germany of union, the illusion of the "fusion of the S.P.D. and the K.P.D.," as it is phrased by the renegades in Germany, will be fostered. The slogan of unity was employed by Comrade Lenin in the period of the split in the Social-Democratic Parties, and in the formation of Left revolutionary wings, and, in that connection, it was of course possible to speak of a unity with the Communist Parties which already existed, to some extent.

To-day we already have great Communist mass Parties which have developed and matured, which are able to fulfil their independent rôle as sole leaders of the proletariat.

In Germany, we have still much to learn from the Czecho-Slovakian Party, in the sphere of mass policy. We must effect a change in this field, in the question of the methods, and the tone to be employed in winning over the Social-Democratic and Free-trade union workers, despite the fact, that in recent times, we can already record some fresh progress in this field. That is important and absolutely necessary. But it is not enough to stop there. We must make a decisive stride forward.

*See page 707.

Comrade Stalin has rightly said: "The masses must convince themselves, on the basis of their own experience, of the correctness of the Party's policy." Thus, we must do all we can, by our slogans, and our policy, to convince the masses, on the basis of their own experience, that there is only *one* workers' Party, only *one* revolutionary Party which demands and upholds the class interests of the proletariat and all toilers — the Communist Party! Precisely for this reason, we must bring the leading rôle of our Party to the political and revolutionary consciousness of the proletarian masses, because we must raise them, and educate them in struggles for the great aims that are ahead of us—for the victory of Socialism. We must not allow any false ideas about unity, or drivel about "unity at any price" to make headway among the masses, just as we must fight most sharply against all syndicalist conceptions, as, for example, the idea that it is possible to achieve the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, without a revolutionary Party. International examples have shown that the working class is tremendously sensitive, when the principle of a revolutionary Party and of its leading rôle is in any way obscured, neglected or set aside. We have seen, for example, in France how the C.G.T. performed manœuvres in the question of the policy of a united front, and how, for a long time, hundreds of thousands of workers were thus led into confusion, so that our Party and the C.G.T.U. sustained a certain loss of tempo through the skilful tactics of the reformists. Let us recall what has already been said at the second World Congress. There, in the theses and statutes it is said:

> "Under certain historical conditions it is quite possible that the working class may be permeated by numerous reactionary strata. The task of Communism does not consist in adapting itself to these backward elements of the working class, but in raising the entire working class up to the level of the Communist vanguard. The confusion of these two conceptions—Party and class—can lead to the greatest mistakes and to chaos."

What real proletarian leadership means has been shown by the victory of the October Revolution in 1917. Without a firm, implacable, vanguard, always connected with the masses, without the Party of the Bolsheviks in the foreground, the masses would not have been convinced of the correctness of the Bolshevik policy, in the then situation. Any weakening, even the smallest weakening, of the leading rôle of our Parties among the masses may lead to the most fatal results in the present tense situation.

Comrades, the Czecho-Slovakian Party has shown us new, and, to some extent, brilliant experiences in the field of mass policy. What we can learn from the Czecho-Slovakian Party is to make use of its skilful methods in the carrying out of mass work; this applies to the mass work of other Parties, but especially to that of the German Party. But it can also be said that our Czecho-Slovakian comrades can sometimes learn from us too.

In addition to our prospects of revolutionary development, we have unfortunately, also such facts and such great weaknesses to record to-day, as have been shown already by Comrade Piatnitsky, in his references to the weakness and defective work of our factory cells.

Let us make a comparison between the Communist factory cadres of the Polish Party, and those of the German Party, in relation to the total number of members. In Germany, only about 12 to 15 per cent. of the total number of members are as yet employed in enterprises, while in Poland, out of the members of our Party who are numbered among the industrial proletariat, we can count nearly 35 to 40 per cent. in the small, medium-size and large enterprises. These facts compel us to take a much stronger line in the orientation of our mass work for the German Party, in particular in the large enterprises, to win over the factory workers for the revolutionary tasks of our Party, and the revolutionary trade union organisations. If we examine the decisions of the Comintern and the Profintern carefully, we will see that the progress which we have made in the important spheres of work in factories, in trade unions and among the unemployed, is still insufficient. Over and above this, we must raise the question of work among the young and among women workers, much more strongly within the province of this important mass work. In Germany, for example, we are attempting to approach the women workers by special new methods, for example, by the system of women worker delegates, to strengthen these sections of the proletariat on the revolutionary class front. Work among the masses of young workers must be improved, at all costs. If we everywhere strengthen our organisational positions in this field, the solution of the task of further developing great mass strikes, through the connection between the Party and the masses will be made still easier for us. The task of launching political mass strikes runs like a red thread through the assignment of tasks drawn up in our resolutions. The inseparable interconnection of political and economic struggles, the great significance of mass strikes as key-points in new conflicts of classes, as the most important lever for the awakening, strengthening and raising of the revolutionary class consciousness and class power of the proletariat, was again and again emphasised by Lenin. We must strengthen the class power of the proletariat by the launching of real partial struggles, and political mass strikes, to bring forward the masses more closely and more rapidly to the decisive struggles for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These are the problems, for whose concrete solution, all sections must work, with all their energy, on the basis of the resolutions of the XII Plenum.

The following questions were given especial significance in the trade union commission of this Plenum. We must do all that we can to win over trade union members for the revolutionary trade union opposition, and carry on a genuine and vigorous struggle for all positions in the trade unions, which are open to election. The winning of elective functions, and positions of leadership further promotes the winning over of trade union members within the individual trade unions.

The second important question was the decision that the formulation "that the economic struggle is, at present, the main form of class struggle" is to be struck out of the resolution. In place of this, the significance of economic struggles, as a means of leading on the backward sections of the workers to the revolutionary mass struggle is emphasised.

The third question concerned the main weaknesses in the work of our Red Unions. In this connection especial mention was made of defective leadership in the struggle for the daily interests of the workers, the insufficient use of the policy of a united front, weaknesses and errors in regard to the employment of proletarian democracy in the unions.

The fourth question was the especial reference to the significance of the work of Communist factions, not only in the Red and reformist unions, but also within the most reactionary and Fascist unions.

Finally, as regards the question of our work among the unemployed. The Prague decisions have hardly been carried out by any of the sections. The reformists attempted to steal a march on us by creating their own organisations of the unemployed. Our task consists in animating and activising the unemployed movement, and further in founding revolutionary organisations of the unemployed, in extending the existing ones, and above all in strengthening our work of opposition in the existing reactionary and, to some

extent, Fascist unemployed organisations and groups.

The "plans for providing work" put forward by the various capitalist governments, and which, in most cases, are mere deceit and hoodwinking, providing the unemployed with little or no work, must cause the sections to put forward immediate demands for the unemployed, as for example in questions of money relief, demands for grants of clothing, linen, shoes, milk and bread for children, etc. The militant union between factory workers and unemployed must be promoted.

In our resolutions on the first two reports, especially definite reference was made to the awakening of militant initiative against the imperialist war. In connection with the struggle of factory workers and unemployed, we must beware here of false opportunist conceptions, such as have manifested themselves to some extent in certain sections.

In the R.T.U.O. in France we have had, among other things, a tendency which went so far as to put forward the formulation: "The economic struggle itself constitutes a struggle against imperialist war." A second tendency which manifested itself especially in France, tended to say: "The anti-war struggle is a political struggle and therefore an affair of the Party only." These are mutually complementary deviations and they represent the most dangerous form of pure and simple trade unionism.

In view of the tenseness of the present accentuated situation and the great increase of the danger of war, the combination of economic struggles with the struggle against imperialist war represents a most important question, and every deviation from the Bolshevik line, becomes a danger of class betrayal to the proletariat.

The following great changes are to be observed to-day in comparison with the XI Plenum: At that time, the strikes were confined, for the most part, to the small and medium-size enterprises, and only in a few complete branches of industry did we have major mass strikes. Now, at the XII Plenum, we can observe a mighty wave of mass strikes, in the various countries, in connection with which, the inter-connection of economic strikes with political mass strikes has reached a higher stage, and is daily becoming clearer. It is our task to concentrate more and more, on the most important large-scale enterprises, especially on the key-points such as transport, chemical and metal enterprises, etc., where we are, generally speaking, still weak.

It is urgently necessary to concentrate more sharply in the direction given to our work on the large-scale enterprises, above all on the factories of war-time importance and the railways.

We speak of the beginnings of a crisis in the Amsterdam International. This means that the process of radicalisation among the members has reached a higher stage. This stage of ferment which can now be observed among almost all members of the Amsterdam International in the various countries, presents us with a favourable opportunity to deepen the increasing cleavage separating the members of the reformist leaders, to systematically make use of this process of radicalisation, to lead the trade union members into the path of our revolutionary mass struggle.

Among the Social-Democratic, Free trade union and unorganised workers, the increasing desire to put up common daily demands is accompanied by the growth of a great militant desire for political mass strikes and general strikes for Socialism, for the destruction of the capitalist system, for the ultimate revolutionary aim, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is our task to make positive use of all these feelings and to raise every militant urge of the masses to a higher revolutionary level.

The present situation is abundantly charged with fresh explosive matter; there is an abundance of causes, for the blazing up of revolutionary mass struggles. We must react quickly, not neglect any occasion, sharpen our revolutionary strength and fighting ability and develop it in a Bolshevik manner. We know that our struggles demand new and great sacrifices. Prison, hard labour, hunger and the rope threaten some of our best comrades and the best of the revolutionary working class. Even in a victorious advance, even in fresh revolutionary progress, we cannot always avoid the occurrence of defeat in individual countries. But that must not in any way hinder our Parties in the further great development of the struggle. Our prospects of victory throughout the entire world, the end of capitalist stabilisation and the new growth of the revolutionary upsurge will aid us and make it easier for us, despite occasional failures, to storm our way forward the more boldly for the further victories of the working class.

The way of the proletariat to proletarian power is a thorny one, strewn with sacrifices. Girded with the weapon of Marxism and Leninism, in unconditional trust in the Comintern and the C.P.S.U., in iron self-confidence in our own strength and in the mighty power of the proletariat, we must go forward with new revolutionary militant spirit to tackle the work and the tasks which await us.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN BELFAST

By Tom Bell.

THE struggle of the unemployed workers in Belfast, Northern Ireland, including the heroic struggle against the armed police on October 11, contains many lessons on proper methods of work among the unemployed. Especially important is the fact that this movement was initiated and led by the Revolutionary Workers' Groups of Belfast (the preparatory groups for the formation of the Communist Party of Ireland) which numbers only about fifty members, and works under very difficult conditions.

Northern Ireland, established in 1920 as a result of the partition of Ireland by British imperialism, has been more severely affected by the economic crisis than any other industrial district of Britain. The two main industries, linen textiles and shipbuilding, are in a catastrophic condition owing to the crisis. The creation of the boundary separating Northern Ireland from the Irish Free State, and the protectionist policy of the latter (greatly increased since the establishment of the De Valera Government) has deprived Northern Ireland of a large market which it supplied as a distributing centre. The puppet state of Northern Ireland is entirely subordinated to Britain in fiscal policy, and is unable to introduce any protectionist policy which would enable local industries to compete with the imported commodities from Britain. The economic crisis in Britain, the United States and Canada, has put a stop to emigration from Northern Ireland, which amounted before the crisis, to about 10,000 a year, and formed an outlet for the unemployed.

The bourgeoisie of Northern Ireland has hitherto been able to utilise the religious prejudices of the Protestant majority against the Catholic minority to prevent a united struggle of the workers. In each crisis they have been able to divert the fight of the Protestant workers against the Catholics. This happened in 1920, when the movement of the unemployed shipyard workers was diverted into a pogrom against the Catholic workers. A year ago an unemployed demonstration organised by the Revolutionary Workers' Groups was broken up by the police, aided by the Protestant workers. It is therefore of great importance, that in the present period the Protestant and Catholic workers are fighting shoulder to shoulder, and many of the fiercest battles against the police took place in the Protestant quarters of the city.

Out of a total population of less than a million and a quarter, the unemployed number over a hundred thousand. The official figures issued by the Labour Exchanges are:

Total Registered at Labour Exchanges	76,000
Total receiving statutory benefit ...	42,710
Total receiving transitional benefit ...	19,380
Total receiving no benefit	13,908

These figures by no means give an accurate picture of the extent of unemployment, because, owing to the length of the crisis, many thousands have been deprived of benefit long ago, and struck off the live register. The "Irish Press" stated that the number of unemployed not registering amounts to thirty thousand. These are mainly composed of youth. The merciless operation of the "Means Test" has deprived thousands of benefit and reduced the benefits of others. Of the total registered unemployed 47,964 reside in Belfast. In several industries the percentage of unemployed is greater than in other districts of Britain. In engineering industries unemployment amounts to 40.8 per cent., while in Scotland it is 40 per cent. In shipbuilding Ulster has 73.7 per cent. unemployed and Scotland has 71.8 per cent. In the building industry unemployment reaches 38.3 per cent.

Through the operation of the "Means Test" increasing the number of unemployed not receiving benefit at the Labour Exchanges, there was an increase in the number of unemployed applying to the Board of Guardians for outdoor relief. Relief work schemes (road repairing, etc.) were started by the city authorities, at which unemployed married men were employed, paying eight shillings a week to a married man and a maximum of twenty-four shillings a week to those having more than four children. Before being employed at this task work the unemployed had to submit to a rigorous investigation as to their circumstances. At the time of the strike about 2,000 were employed on these relief works. The length of employment averaged about six months, at from one to three days a week.

During this year the Revolutionary Workers' Groups carried on a broad agitation among the relief workers and was able to organise the Outdoor Relief Workers' Committee, composed of elected delegates from the various relief works and trade union branches. This committee elected Comrade Geehan secretary and developed a campaign for a strike of relief workers. On September 30 at a mass meeting of 2,000 relief workers the decision to strike was endorsed and the following demands adopted:

1. Abolition of task work.
2. Increase in scale of relief to following rates:

Man 15s. 3d. per week, wife 8s. per week, each child 2s. per head.

3. No payment in kind—all relief to be paid in cash.
4. Street improvement work under the Exceptional Distress Relief scheme, or schemes of like character, to be done at trade union rate of wages.
5. Adequate outdoor allowances to all single men and women who are unemployed, and not in receipt of unemployment benefit.

The date for the strike was set for October 3, and on that day 20,000 workers demonstrated in support of the strikers. The Mayor and Board of Guardians invited representatives of the Relief Workers' Committee to meet them, to discuss the demands of the strikers, and offered to increase the amount of work per man by fifty per cent. A mass meeting of the strikers held on October 7, on the proposal of Comrade Geehan, who was chairman of the meeting, rejected this offer. The meeting further adopted the proposal to organise a demonstration on October 11, and, in preparation for it, organised demonstrations in various districts and at factory gates. The slogans of a school children's strike, a rent strike, and a general strike of the trade unions were issued. The general strike slogan was so popular that the leaders of the Trade Council called a special meeting to discuss the situation and to sidetrack the general strike sentiment, by means of paying lip service to the idea of a general strike. This they did by means of a resolution calling on the Board of Guardians to grant the demands of the strikers, and in the event of them not doing so, a special meeting of the Trades Council was to be called to discuss the calling of a general strike.

On October 8 the Relief Workers' Committee organised a house-to-house collection of money and food to establish a food depot to supply the strikers. Over £300 was collected in cash, plus many tons of food collected from shopkeepers, and this was distributed to the strikers. The single men and women unemployed carried out a mass raid on the workhouse under the leadership of Comrade Arthur Griffin. The Board of Guardians attempted to split the ranks of the strikers by appealing to them to return to work on Monday on the promise that they would receive more days work per week. This was combatted by the Committee, which pointed out that such an offer did not meet their demands regarding continuity of benefit, payment in cash, and relief for the single unemployed.

On October 8 and 9 many mass meetings were held, including a special meeting for the wives of the strikers and the working women from the textile mills. These meetings decided to proceed with the demonstration on the 11th. The government of Northern Ireland prohibited the meeting on October 10 and brought in 800 police from other districts, armed the police with rifles (about 4,000 altogether) and patrolled the streets with armoured cars and mounted police. In spite of these elaborate preparations for the smashing of the demonstration, the unemployed came on to the streets on the morning of the 11th. At the various concentration points where the demonstrators gathered, the police immediately attacked with their batons, and, at those points where they could not disperse the demonstration, they opened fire with their rifles. Two workers were killed, one seriously wounded, and about one hundred in all wounded by rifle fire.

The workers defended themselves with stones, erected barricades by ripping up paving stones, and in some places dug trenches to hold up the armoured cars. The resistance to the police attacks was so stubborn that it was not until the evening that the streets had been cleared. The police attacked with unexampled savagery, and entered houses and beat the inmates. In many districts where the streets had been torn up by the workers, the residents were forced, under the rifles of the police, to repair the streets. During the day seventy workers were arrested. The government introduced a curfew law under which no one was allowed on the streets between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. A cordon of police was thrown around the city and no one was allowed to leave, or enter, without police permission.

But the unbreakable solidarity of the workers, and especially the heroic struggle against the armed police forced the government and the Board of Guardians to announce a new scale of relief as follows: On October 14, for a man and wife, 2½ days work at 20 shillings a week; man and wife with 3 or 4 children, 3½ days work at 28 shillings a week; man and wife with over 4 children, 4 days work at 32 shillings a week. These terms were made to a delegation from the Trades Council who, in turn, communicated them to the Relief Workers' Committee. The latter called a mass meeting of the strikers and proposed that the terms be accepted. Comrade Geehan, who was chairman of the meeting, stated:

"What we have achieved gives the direct lie and contradiction to those who said the workers of Belfast could not be united, and would not fight. They had seen Protestants and Catholics marching together and, on Tuesday, fighting together. Three weeks ago married men with families went to the Guardians, to be treated with contempt, and offered 8s. a week. Now the government and Guardians had been forced to increase this to 24s. and 32s. a week, and to fix a scale. Never

before was there a scale. The amount offered depended on the mood of the Guardians. The single men and women had also secured a victory, and a minimum of 10s. a week would be granted. The workers would no longer have to answer insulting questions. The only qualification required for the benefit would be that the applicant was genuinely unemployed, and was not in receipt of the dole. Although accepting the terms, they would make it clear to the authorities that they were not satisfied with the task work. They looked forward to the day when task work would be stopped altogether."

In preparations for further struggles the meeting decided to organise a *trade union of relief workers* to see that the new terms were carried out. Another resolution demanded the release of those arrested during the week and protested against the deportation of Comrade Tom Mann.

The funeral of the victims of the police shooting was attended by tens of thousands of workers, and the press states that one hundred thousand people lined the streets. The police were mobilised for the occasion and armoured cars accompanied the procession. While leaving the cemetery, Comrade Tom Mann was arrested by government order and deported back to England.

The Belfast events show it is possible for the small Revolutionary Workers' groups, by the correct application of united front tactics, to lead such a mass movement. It would be a mistake to think that the movement only drew into action the married unemployed relief workers. By correctly concentrating their work among the married and single unemployed, who were receiving no benefits from the Labour Exchange, the R.W.G. were able to set the whole mass of the unemployed in motion. The Relief Workers' Committee contained, besides our comrades, representatives from the unemployed, the trade unions and the Labour Party. At the mass meetings the Labour Party and "left" trade union officials attempted to defeat the R.W.G. policy by putting forward the slogan: "Wait until the June elections," i.e., until the elections for the Board of Guardians, at which the Labour Party will appeal for the election of "Labour men" to the Board, who will grant higher relief to all applicants. This treacherous policy was defeated by the R.W.G. going to the workers with a concrete programme of demands, and a persistent agitation for strike action, and the organisation of mass demonstrations, exposing the opportunist policy of the trade union officials and Labour Party politicians. Undoubtedly the success of the unemployed struggle in Birkenhead had a great effect in Belfast. It lent impetus to the slogans of action put forward by the R.W.G. and the fact that, in Birkenhead, the unemployed had forced concessions by militant action, made it easier for our comrades to expose the Labour Party policy of switching the struggle on to the parliamentary arena. During the mass meetings and demonstrations the workers themselves put forward the slogans: "Up, Birkenhead," "Up, Soviet Russia," this movement has resulted in a political awakening among the workers. This is seen by the more farseeing of the bourgeois press, The "Manchester Guardian" wrote on October 14:

"It is one of the paradoxes of Northern Ireland that the maintenance of an old religious and political feud has prevented the development of what by economic conditions, temperament and tradition is almost naturally a revolutionary urban proletariat. *The social order was rather badly shaken this week.* (Our emphasis.)

This is further shown by the statement of Sir S. Cripps, a leader of the British Labour Party in the parliament of October 19:

"When they (the Labour Party politicians) told the unemployed that they could achieve nothing by rioting they were met at once by the argument of what happened at Birkenhead and Belfast."

The solidarity of the workers, and the open appeals of the R.W.G. against religious sectarianism, and the exposure of those using religious prejudices to split the workers' ranks, deprived the bourgeoisie and their churches of their favourite weapon of religious pogroms of Protestants against Catholics. The Protestant churches united in an appeal to the government to make concessions to the unemployed, and the Catholic church dignitaries followed suit at the same time denouncing the "menace of Bolshevism." The bitter reactionary newspaper, the "Northern Whig," which is notorious for its pogrom-mongering against the Catholics, abandoned the "No Popery" cry and launched an attack of the Communists. In its issue of October 10 it wrote:

". . . the strike of the men engaged on these schemes continues though it would probably have been ended by now, but for the intervention of the Communists, who have assumed the leadership of the strike movement, and are more eager to prolong the dispute than to promote a settlement on reasonable terms."

Following the events of October 11 it wrote under the heading: "Mob Rule Must be Suppressed":

"Yesterday's events have made it abundantly clear that the strike of relief workers, numbering over nineteen hundred men, was fomented by political extremists, who have gathered around them large numbers of people ready to stone the police, wreck property, loot shops, and generally create a reign of terror in the streets. No com-

munity can tolerate mob rule, and those whose duty it is to maintain law and order will have the support of every good citizen in rigorously suppressing any further attempts to reduce the life of the city to chaos."

On October 15 it wrote: :

"We heartily congratulate the police authorities on the prompt action they have taken to counteract the new Communist offensive in Belfast."

In the same issue it uttered a warning to the trade union leaders as follows:

"In our view, which we believe is shared by the overwhelming majority of the citizens of Belfast, the leaders of the trade unions, *who have been toying with the general strike weapon,* would do well to dissociate themselves from any such attack on industry, on the employed workers and on the community." (Our emphasis.)

The "Labour Leaders" showed by their actions that they were only "toying with the general strike weapon" in order to prevent any general strike, and the R.W.G. were so weak in the trade unions that they were unable to give leadership to the sentiment for a general strike among the trade union membership.

Revolutionary mass action in Belfast, Birkenhead and Liverpool forced concessions for the unemployed from the bourgeoisie. These revolutionary actions gained practical results for the starving workers, and glaringly exposed the reformist leaders of the Labour Parties and trade unions who continually "warned" the workers that the "riot" policy of the Communists would gain them nothing. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," and the practical results of the revolutionary policy of the Communists did more to disillusion the workers with the "safe and sane" policy of the reformists, than the most eloquent speeches could have done. That is why the Labour Party politicians in the British parliament whine before the die-hards, and plead with them to give *them* some concessions, otherwise the workers will be more convinced, that not the Labour Party policy, but the revolutionary policy of the Communist Party alone can bring them success in their struggle against starvation.

In a manifesto issued on October 15th the Belfast District Committee of the R.W.G. drew the lesson from the Belfast events:

"The problem before militant workers, in their fight for wages and maintenance, is the strengthening of the R.W.G., the organisation in every factory and work-place, the spreading of the R.W.G. throughout the country, and the earliest drawing together of all those forces for the organisation of the Communist Party of Ireland.

"Through a powerful movement of the working class in alliance with the poor farmers, in the creation of a powerful All-Ireland Workers' Party —the Communist Party of Ireland—can the starvation policy of the capitalists be defeated, their rule, and that of imperialism over Ireland be broken, and a united independent nation, a Workers' and Farmers' Republic be brought into being."

Quite correctly the comrades in Belfast see that, operating on the basis of the tremendous mass movement, they can place before the most advanced revolutionary workers the immediate task of forming the Communist Party of Ireland, and have broken with the policy hitherto pursued of pushing the necessity for the organisation of the Communist Party into the background. The R.W.G. have the task of recruiting from the workers who participated in the action of October 11 into the ranks of the R.W.G., and concentrating all forces in building a mass basis for the C.P.I.* At the same time, the work inside the trade unions must be speeded up. The manner in which the trade union leaders were able to smother the sentiment for a general strike must be taken into account, and the lesson learned, that the grip of the reformists on the trade union workers can only be broken by the most vigorous work inside the trade unions and factories. The successful leadership of the mass movement, and the defeat of the Labour Party before the masses, gives us the possibility, by real mass work, to isolate the Labour Party politicians from them. Only the failure of the Communists to take advantage of the favourable objective situation can prevent the lessons of the mass struggle of the Belfast unemployed being made clear to the workers, making a great step towards the formation of the Communist Party of Ireland.

* Communist Party of Ireland.

Note to Subscribers

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